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TRAVELS IN ABYSSINIA

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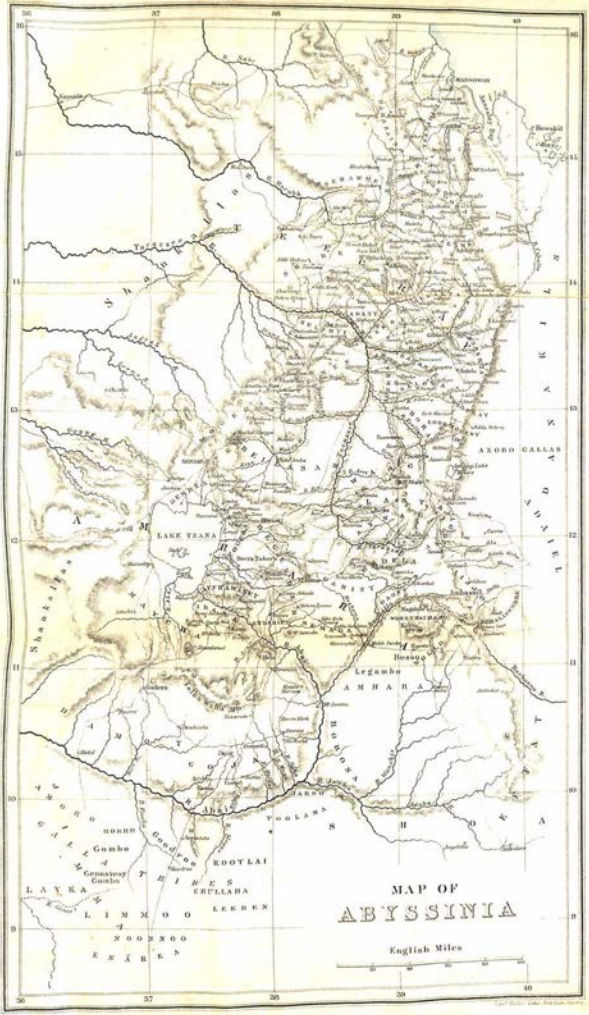
MAP OF
ABYSSINIA
English Miles
LAKE TZANA
AXORO GALLAS
Legambo
Bosso
AMHARA
SHOA
Gombo
KOOTLAI
LAYKA
LIMMOO
LEEBEN
TIBES
CRULLAHA
SHOHO
ENARIA

TRAVELS IN ABYSSINIA

AND

THE GALLA COUNTRY.

WITH

AN ACCOUNT OF A MISSION TO RAS ALI IN 1848.

60732

WALTER CHICHELE PLOWDEN

HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S CONSUL IN ABYSSINIA.

EDITED BY HIS BROTHER

TREVOR CHICHELE PLOWDEN.

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1868.

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PREFACE.

THIS VOLUME has been compiled from the MSS. of the late Walter Chichele Plowden, Her Britannic Majesty's Consul in Abyssinia.

This gentleman, the youngest son of the late Trevor Chichele Plowden, of the Bengal Civil Service, was born on August 3, 1820. At the age of nineteen he went to India, and joined the firm of Carr, Tagore, & Co., of Calcutta. The sedentary duties of a mercantile life being ill-suited to his genius, he threw up all the advantages of such a career, and in 1843 embarked for England. On his arrival at Suez, *en route*, he fell in with Mr. Bell, and his ardent and ambitious temperament induced him, on the spur of the moment, without preparation and with limited funds, to join that gentleman in an expedition into Abyssinia, with the object of discovering the source of the White Nile. He was nearly twenty-three years of age when he thus plunged into this strange country. He remained in it till 1847, when he embarked at Massowah for Suez in a native boat, and was shipwrecked in the Red Sea, narrowly escaping with life, and losing all his property, and especially many valuable MSS. On his

arrival in England, he laid before Lord Palmerston, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the information he had acquired in his five years of travel, which was deemed to be of sufficient importance to induce that farseeing politician to establish a consulate in Abyssinia, to which post he appointed Mr. Plowden.

Accordingly, in 1848, this gentleman returned to Massowah, charged, as his first duty, with a mission to Ras Ali, then the *de facto* ruler of Abyssinia; and from that time till 1860 he remained in the interior, detained there at first by his duties, and afterwards by the occupation of the road to Massowah by a powerful rebel.

In February 1860, he took leave of King Theodore to return to England. On March 4 he had arrived close to Gondar, on the bank of the Kaka river, where he was suddenly attacked by Dejaj Garred, a chief attached to the rebel, Dejaj Negousee, with 400 followers, and in the encounter received a spear-wound in the chest. In this condition he was taken prisoner, and only given up on payment of a ransom of 1,000 dollars, which was advanced by the authorities of Gondar. He was carried into the town, and, after lingering for nine days, died there. He was buried in the King's church, with all the pomp and ceremony of an Abyssinian funeral, the clergy and all the population of Gondar attending his remains to the grave.

The MSS., which were forwarded to me after his death, were received in a most mutilated state—loose sheets, some of them unfinished, others illegible, and a volume in pencil-writing so minute, as to be deciphered

only with the greatest labour and patience. The difficulty of arranging such crude materials into a form suitable for the press may be conceived. But the subject commanding, at the present time, so large a share of public interest, it was thought right to make the effort, and the result is the publication of these sketches of life in Abyssinia, which have, at least, the merit of originality and truth.

A posthumous work will always require a special share of indulgence, and it is hoped that such will be accorded to this, the more readily, as it is the production of a very young man, and as the Editor has no personal recollections wherewith to supplement these materials, never having seen his brother since he was seven years old; and therefore he has felt the more bound, in order to retain the intrinsic character of the work, to give the contents of the MSS. as he found them, avoiding corrections wherever it was possible.

From the difficulty in deciphering some portions of the MSS., errors may have occasionally arisen in the orthography, and the names of places and things; but pains have been taken to remedy and correct these, as far as possible, by reference to other books on Abyssinia.

Conscious of the imperfections of a work so peculiarly requiring the revision and superintendence of the author, to whose talents the publication of unfinished MSS. can do but little justice, the Editor still hopes that the following pages, in spite of defects of style, will be read with some degree of interest, as the record of one whose best years were devoted, and his life ultimately sacrificed, to

the people of Abyssinia, and to the effort to bring them within the reach of European civilisation.

Of the maps which accompany this volume, the one of the Northern Frontier was compiled by my brother entirely from his personal observations, and though it does not pretend to astronomical exactness, its general accuracy may be relied on. The other map is modelled on the War Office Map of Abyssinia, by the kind permission of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for War.

T. C. P.

LONDON: *March* 31, 1868.

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NORTHERN
FRONTIER PROVINCES
OF
ABYSSINIA.
English Miles.
10
20
38°
39°
17°
16°
BENI AMER
BARKA
HALHAL
BELAYN
TEKLEES
HABAB
AYTA MARIAM
MENSAH
SHEB
GEDGED
HAMAZAIN
RED SEA
Sandy Plains
HEPTEES
Tahra Tsuleem
Asaguddee Bukla
Asaguddee Rora
Wawgerayt
MAIRATSULEEM
Tshaka
Maira Kaiah
Alee Bukeet
Mugaira
Ada Neffas
Agger Meezan
Libka
Shellak
Haigut
Mensah
Afabat
Rairoo
Yemke Hills
Terakula
Sheb Noosh
Mahabar
Monkoolee
MASSOWAH
Sandy Plains (on Water in the Dry Season)
Edwd Weller, Red Lion Square.
London: Longman & Co.

ABYSSINIA

AND

THE GALLA COUNTRY.

CHAPTER I.

THE NORTH AND WEST FRONTIER OF ABYSSINIA.

THE EMPIRE OF ABYSSINIA—MASSOWAH—BEDOUINS—MOUNTAIN RANGES AND TRIBES—THEIR CHARACTER, HABITS, AND CUSTOMS—VALLEY OF THE ANSUBA—BARKA—SHANKALLAS—TALTALS—DANKALI.

THE EMPIRE of ABYSSINIA is often confounded with that of Ethiopia: it appears to me that the latter, more ancient, and comprising more especially the black races of African origin, whose monarchs were the antagonists of the Pharaohs, extended from Upper Egypt over the provinces of Sennaar and Nubia, and those vast plains between Sennaar and the Red Sea, now inhabited by roving Arabs, and Shankalla or negro tribes, and perhaps reached the mountains now inhabited by the Abyssinians.

The Empire of Abyssinia, properly speaking, commenced to the southward, where the other ended, and of this we have some knowledge from the time of Solomon; the infusion of Jewish blood and Jewish institutions being still strongly apparent in the modern races, however difficult it may be to separate truth from falsehood, in the tales connecting them with that nation.

The natural distinction of the two empires, often loosely confounded, is that the Empire of Ethiopia entirely

extended over plains and level countries, whereas that of Abyssinia is a high plateau from 4,000 to 14,000 feet above the sea, well and sharply defined on every border, and which was only quitted when a temporary strength tempted the inhabitants to overrun the neighbouring low countries.

Abyssinia, at periods of which we have authentic information, comprised the countries of Northern Abyssinia and Shoa, now inhabited by Christians, with the intervening tribes of Gallas (Mahomedans who have interposed and occupied the fairest provinces by the right of the sword), and the coast of the Red Sea from Tajoura to Sowakim; towards the equator, Enarea and Kaffa, now Galla kingdoms; and to the north-west, Sennaar nearly to Kartoom.

Of this now dismembered royalty—whose wrecks are divided and subdivided, to the distraction of travellers and historians, and whose kings are displaced by strong-handed barbarians—the only portion that concerns this present chapter, is that bearing north and west from Massowah, and which merits this notice solely from the fact of no other traveller perhaps having visited it, or recorded any facts respecting the various occupants. As regards the general history of the country, I would refer the reader to Ludolf and to Bruce, and would only again remind him that the Empire of Ethiopia, properly speaking, is now entirely governed by the descendants of Mahomed Ali; whilst Abyssinia, or what is left as still possessing the Christian faith, obeys chiefs of its own creed or nation.

The island of Massowah is now in the hands of the Turks, who have also a fortress on the mainland at Dohona, and who claim, by various titles, the sovereignty of the coast generally, from the sea to the highlands of Abyssinia; and they extract from the various tribes as much tribute as they can by means of the Naib, now their

lieutenant on the mainland, but whose ancestors having been for some years independent rulers, possesses a certain influence over those scattered races.

The mixture of races at Massowah renders it hopeless to give to its inhabitants a distinct name. They speak a mixture of the Teegray and Arabic, with a few words whose origin is scarcely known; they live entirely by their trade with the Abyssinians in slaves and other articles of commerce, and are fanatical Mahomedans; though a marked change has taken place, in the last five or six years, in their treatment and reception of Europeans. The island is small, but, notwithstanding the high temperature, is generally, as well as the surrounding country, healthy, with a secure though small harbour, and another larger, not in use, a mile or so to the northward. The people of Dohona, on the mainland, style themselves the tribe Arkeeko, and are by origin Hababs, though now mixed with all the other tribes, having abandoned in a great degree their wandering and nomadic habits for the sweets of commerce and the profits of a town life.

Having thus mentioned these, the only fixed towns or villages on the coast, even to near Sowakim, the first race of people we find are the Bedouins.

In Europe and Asia, philologists have succeeded, to a great extent, in classifying the different languages spoken, and deducing them more or less from known sources; but in Africa (as well as in the aboriginal languages of America), a vast confusion arises, not only from the number of dialects derivable from Arabic, and which in the lapse of time are becoming widely different, but also from the number of absolutely different languages to which no origin can be assigned. I find this difficulty in the aboriginal speech of the Bedouins, to which I can assign no source, and which has no affinity either to the

Geez* and Amharic, or to the Arabic, or even to that of any other neighbouring tribe. They speak generally the dialect of Massowah, from frequent intercourse, but are not understood in return when they speak in their native tongue. Their principal property consists in goats, sheep, and camels. Forming themselves into tribes or families, which have each a separate name, independent of the locality they may occupy, they wander, in search of grass for their flocks, over a small territory of, perhaps, 100 miles in length by 30 in breadth. This is generally over hot sandy plains, water being found, however, more abundantly, even in the hot season, than is usual in countries of similar formation, which favourable circumstance is owing to the fact that the rivers of Abyssinia seek an outlet to the sea in this direction, and hide themselves underground from the scorching rays, at a distance of from two or three to twenty feet below the surface.

In the rainy season of the coast, from December to March or April, frequent showers produce an immediate verdure, and water is plentiful. The torrents or beds of rivers are all dry in the hot season, except at certain spots where wells are dug; and during the Abyssinian rains, and also during the rains on the coast, sometimes torrents of water descend to the sea with immense force and rapidity during several hours, and then disappear. It is necessary during these months carefully to avoid camping in these river-beds, and the sand in them becomes loose and dangerous for some time after. Many of these torrents have their banks clothed with a thick jungle, filled with wild beasts, and affording a pleasant shade to the traveller. The tree, forming it, grows only in the hottest countries, and resembles the willow, having also a constant tremulous motion and rustling sound.

* This language is derived from the Hebrew and Arabic.

In the Bedouin country the principal districts are Wokkeeroo and Aliguddee. These districts abound with gazelles and ostriches, and in many places lions, with vast numbers of hyænas and jackals; a beautiful species of fox is sometimes found, and the African hog is numerous in some districts. An excellent cement is made of burnt gypsum; coarse white marble abounds, and spars of several kinds. Gum-arabic might be obtained in considerable quantities, and a small trade in hides is carried on with Egypt. For large timber, they are obliged to go to the hills inhabited by the Shiho tribes. I have found, by experience, that cotton thrives here admirably with irrigation, and might be cultivated to a great extent.

In moving a camp or village, they carry on camels all their worldly goods, including their huts, which are made of long canes tied together at the top, after being bent down into a beehive shape, and covered with mats. In some places, where the villages are stationary, they cover their huts with grass. The camp is made in a circular form, and the flocks and camels disposed at night in the centre. Milk is their principal diet, and the butter sold procures them Indian maize, which, boiled with butter and salt, forms their bread. Their dress is very light, and they pay most attention to their hair—worn by the men in an enormous friz, profusely covered with cow or other fat, and having invariably a long slender pin of wood, like a bent skewer, sticking in it. Marrying and giving in marriage, with the attendant tom-toms and singing, is one of their great occupations and delights. Their religion is Mahomedan, but they are not fanatical, and, generally speaking, know little of it but the name. Being poor, they work willingly, though not hard, and are sufficiently harmless as a body, and submissive. Crimes are rare, the prison of Massowah having nearly a sinecure; nor have they any marked bad qualities, in my

experience, except indolence. This I attribute much to no efforts having been made to improve them: thus they are contented generally with little knowledge, few cares, and a great indifference to most things except the means of filling their stomachs for the passing day. They profess obedience to the Naib as the representative of the Sultan. In person they are of a dark copper colour, generally of middle stature, slight, not strong, but active and enduring when they please, and mostly of small pretensions to personal beauty. Their wives perform most of the labour necessary for the domicile; in this respect being contrary to the women of Massowah, who, when once married, expect to be served by slaves, and never make themselves of the least use.

The hot spring at Eylat, about thirty miles to the westward of Massowah, is much resorted to from all parts by persons afflicted with diseases. The water at the source is about 150° Fahr., and in the hot season trickles down about half a mile farther: it is likewise found in the bed of a torrent near Wokkecroo. Elephants are found in this neighbourhood at certain seasons, and lions are both numerous and dangerous to the camels and herds, though seldom attacking men unprovoked. Snakes, some of them poisonous, abound everywhere. The temperature of the hot spring at the bathing-pool is from 115° to 125° Fahr.

The Bedouins are much given to talking, their tongues making an incessant chatter from morning till night. Infanticide occasionally occurs in the case of unmarried girls becoming pregnant, nor do they appear to regard it in these as a crime. The Turkish Government takes no notice of it, probably as it does not in any way affect the emoluments of the governor or his suite; and the Bedouins are so poor that it is not worth while to pick a quarrel with them.

Along the coast to the north is a belt of about thirty miles, in level plains, resembling the country of the Bedouins, and occupied by the great tribe of Hababs; to the westward, again, two spurs or ranges of hills of all altitudes proceed from Hamazain (the northernmost province of Abyssinia, now occupied and governed by a Christian chief); and between these, in a low valley but slightly raised above the sea-level, flows the River Ansuba, receiving all the small rills that pour from the mountains to the westward, while the sea receives the torrents of the eastern range.

These ranges of hills may reach from Hamazain to the northward perhaps 150 miles, and all the tribes thereof, now roving herdsmen, formed originally a portion of the Abyssinian race; whilst the Arab tribes, subject more or less to the Pacha of Sennaar, commence with that named Ali Bukeet, extending round the base of the western range, and joining the Beni Ameers of the same parentage, who, under different names—as Hallenga, Haddenda, Tokur, &c.—reach to Sowakim, and fill the plain betwixt the Rivers Takazzee and Marubb, whose valleys are called, by the Arabs, El Gasch and Barka. The former river, after a short course to the northward, turns to the west, and flows, through provinces occupied by various tribes of Arabs, into the Blue Nile. The Rivers Barka and Ansuba severally turn to the eastward, and make their way into the Red Sea to the southward of Sowakim, through the country of the Arabs, called Hirandooa, which produces excellent dromedaries and great hunters.

Having given this general sketch of the country, I will now describe, more particularly, the various inhabitants, and the nature of the different districts.

On the spur of hills nearest to the sea, and adjoining the plains of the Bedouins, the first districts, or those nearest to Hamazain—as Ada Neffas, Jemidjan, Adebaro,

&c., as far northward as Memsah—still retain, with the language of Teegray, or one even more nearly approaching the Geez,—in great measure the Christian faith, though priests have mostly abandoned these districts, and the churches, with few exceptions, are in ruins. Even the converts to Islamism, who have been increasing simply from the pressure of circumstances, and the want of protectors of their own faith for sixty years past, are by no means fanatical in their new creed. They obey in some degree, and pay tribute to, the chief of Teegray, to avoid spoliation, but are governed by chiefs of their own, and not appointed by him. On the other hand, the Naib frequently demands a similar token of respect and submission, and, for fear of a Turkish expedition, he is also paid, sometimes even receiving hostages; so that their whole time is spent in seeking how best to evade or conciliate their different masters, neither of whom are strong enough definitely to seize and occupy these districts, whilst each of them possesses power and a zealous will to ravage them on the smallest pretext. Their religion, as I have said, partakes of this same ambiguity; and whilst the Mahomedans and Christians of Abyssinia and of Massowah scrupulously refuse to eat meat with each other, in these districts it is thought a matter of little consequence.

On the other spur of hills, the country of Hallal is in like manner still half-Christian, and in like manner attacked alternately by the troops of Oobeay,* and the Turks of Sennaar, from the quarter of Taka or Gasch. The tribute once paid to either party for the year, these districts are then left to govern themselves as they please, and to replace their losses by plundering their neighbours. As may be supposed, the only law is that of the strongest; and wars and blood-feuds, betwixt man and man, village

* The then ruler of Teegray.

and village, and tribe and tribe, as each may find that exciting pastime agreeable, are the only occupations that vary the monotony of driving their flocks and herds to pasture.

From Memsah and Shellah it will be seen that the torrent Libka is the southern boundary, more or less exact, of the Hababs, the Ansuba in the west, and the Beni Ameer to the north. On the western bank of the Ansuba are the tribes of Maira, a corruption for Maria or Mary. All these, being nearer the influence of the Mahomedans, and further from their old progenitors of Teegray, have within a hundred years been entirely converted to Islamism, though still bearing no particular enmity to Christians. The Hababs pay tribute to the Naib, and the tribes of Maira to Taka, though occasionally even these suffer from the arms of Oobeay, when they descend at certain seasons to feed their cattle in the valley of the Ansuba. The countries of Senhait, Mugaira, and Belayn may generally be described as coming in all these points under the category of Memsah and Hallal, and are confined to the valley of the Ansuba, or the smaller hills in its neighbourhood.

In the torrent descending from Libka at Eyn (the boundary in that direction of the Bedouin territory), you find the most pleasing spectacle that the eye can dwell on in so hot and arid a country. A bright and gushing stream of some inches in depth flows for some miles, producing a verdure along its course. In a moment, the prints of the lordly lion inform you that the long reeds and dense thorns have charms for him also, and it is, in fact, one of his most noted haunts; millions of desert partridges and rock pigeons bathe and whirr around the glittering rill, while the deer and wild beasts rush to satiate their thirst as soon as the sun becomes powerful; but the prettiest living object is the elegant moose-deer, who peeps

through the underwood, timidly treading light as a snow-flake, till startled, when he bounds away with a small shrill cry to a thicker shade. Between the watercourses of Wokkeeroo and Eyn extends an arid plain, where there is no water for about thirty miles; this at all times is a favourite spot for predatory incursions, and is seldom free from bands of Habab robbers.

From here to the northwards there is a space of some days' journey, with scarcely any water, over flat plains, unfrequented in the hot season; but by passing some distance up the river, you arrive at another route more westerly, and find the tribe of Ayta Mariam, one of the three tribes of the Hababs. Their tradition is that Asaguddee, who resided in Asaguddee Bukla, was the father of three sons—Heptees, Teklees, and Ayta Mariam, from whom the three tribes are now named. Their traditions reach only to the recent fact of their having been all Christians; but they do not remember anything of the Abyssinian chiefs who governed them in ancient times. They call their language Teegray, and, in fact, it is the dialect that preserves the greatest resemblance to the Geez or ancient Ethiopic, as it is sometimes called.

The formation of the plains of Rorat and Afabat is irregular; masses of rock are tumbled about in the strangest and wildest forms—some resting on a pillar-like base, with the head hanging over as a canopy, others balanced like rocking-stones; some, again, forming immense natural caves, or hollowed out at the top, those containing clear pools of rain-water being known to the herdsmen. Many square miles of country are thus covered, and it is difficult to find a road through this vast confusion of blocks of granite, interspersed with thorny plants. In many spots it resembles the work of man's hand, being smooth as if done with a chisel, and which the rain cannot have caused, as it is the same on all sides. Also on the

same surface several niches may be found; some you can sit in, others are long enough to form a bed, sometimes mere pigeon-holes. In many, shelter may be found as perfect as in a house, and these are used, in case of danger, to conceal the numerous goats and sheep, as well as families of this tribe. Such must have been the country of the Troglodytes, described by Herodotus; and certainly man in a primitive state, with few wants, would there have no occasion to weary himself with architecture, even water-basins being provided by the bountiful, and here whimsical, hand of nature.

I found at Afabat one confused inscription on the roof of a small cave, resembling the letter W, but could make nothing of it. There appeared to have been some ancient writing, and also later Arabic and Persian characters. With all my researches, I could find only this and one in Asaguddee Bukla, which I shall describe hereafter, with the same letter again traceable—W. Had they been more numerous, by comparison one with another, some probable conjecture might have been formed as to their origin; but with two only, obliterated either purposely or by time, I was unable to form even a theory.

The country of the tribe Heptees of the Hababs, to the northward of this, is much larger, and richer in flocks and herds. This tribe import large quantities of butter into Massowah, which is sent over to Jeddah, Mocha, and other ports of the Arabian coast. In the rainy season on the coast, they descend to the sea for pasturage, and in the months of May to November return to the hills as far as Asaguddee Bukla. They are warlike, and feared by the Beni Ameers, but are more peaceable, on the whole, than might be expected, being much afraid of firearms. The Naib still contrives to extort some money from them for the Pacha of Massowah; but with this payment they are entirely independent, as the expeditions of Oobeay and of

the Sennaar troops have never reached this tribe. They have one or two principal chiefs, called Kinitibas, who exercise a paternal sway, and for a nomad race they are wealthy and happy.

The country of the third tribe of the Teklees takes the spur of hills from Haboora to Asaguddee Bukla, with some of the low countries bordering on the other two tribes, and also the valley of the Ansuba to Shilhat; here they also intermingle with the Beni Ameers, with whom they are on friendly terms. The high ranges of Asaguddee are extremely cold, the thermometer being from 50° to 70° Fahr., and a piercing wind continually blowing, as it stands exposed, like a promontory, to two seas. There is a fine pasturage, and forests of fir and olive-trees agreeably surprise the eye, rising to a sudden elevation of 3,000 feet above the sea-level.

In Asaguddee Bukla are the marks of an immense fixed population, and I should conjecture that at a former period it was the seat of an Abyssinian governor. The whole country is strewed with ruins; but here, as elsewhere, at no time has the Abyssinian nation seemed to possess the least idea of architecture, or of perpetuating their memory by inscriptions, which renders it the most uninteresting of countries to the antiquarian. Though no doubt exists of the antiquity of these remains, and of others, as at Abrantanti, no means can be found to certify their epoch, nor any traces that illustrate the manners or customs of the founders. The only ruins that repay examination in Abyssinia are those, first, of the Greeks at the Ptolemaic era—as at Axum, Adoulis, Lallibella, and other places; and, secondly, of the Portuguese, who built some bridges and castles. Even these examples failed to stimulate a nation that Christianity could not rouse out of their professed indifference and materialism; and heaps of stones, uncut and barren, only testify that at

these spots their ancestors lived, fought, and perished, as they do now, without a thought but to continue a feverish existence.

I found at Asaguddee Rora, one large stone with lines cut in different directions; but there being no resemblance to letters, with the exception of the W, before mentioned, nor to hieroglyphics, nor anything else, natural or unnatural, I consider it to be either cut by shepherd-boys for their amusement when watching the flocks, or, if an inscription, studiously defaced. Immediately above this, on a high rock, are the ruins of an extensive range of stone houses, of which the legend runs thus in the country.

The owner, at an immense distance of time, was the possessor of innumerable flocks, and a mighty man; he could not count his riches. One night, when, as usual, this sea of sheep and goats was brought to be milked, he was attacked by illness, and being alone, no one could hear his cries for the bleating, and he died. In the morning his son found the body, and, having buried him, was about to punish all the attendants for their carelessness, when they pleaded the impossibility of their hearing. The son, to try if this was true, caused several drums to be beaten at milking-time, when so great was the ba-a-ing that he could not hear them, on which he pardoned the domestics. The tale might serve for one of the shepherd-kings whose head-quarters were at Meroë; and it is not improbable that the ruins of Abrantanti and of this Asaguddee Bukla were two of their stations. The whole country, at any rate, is strewed with remains, so that it must have been nearly one city for many miles where now the wild elephant roves undisturbed amidst the casual flocks and camels of the Hababs.

From some points of these heights, you obtain magnificent views of the whole Habab country, to the Red

Sea on the one side, and the vast valley of the Ansuba, and the plains of the Beni Ameers, floating away from the eye into a hazy distance, on the other. Below, all is hot and glowing, while invigorating breezes play on your head. You tread on a springy and green turf, and have a garden of nature's evergreens around you. There is here a beautiful kind of pigeon, in colour resembling a pouter, and with a beak and legs of golden-yellow; partridges and guinea-fowl, with wild hogs, abound; also the large antelopes called *agazin*.

In each small village there is kept a cow of one breed, from generation to generation, on which the good fortune of the entire herd depends. This cow (or they may be two) is milked in peculiar vessels, and the milk must be drunk out of those vessels, as it would be sacrilege to pour it into any other; these are of earthenware, whilst the other cows are milked into wickerwork vases. Should this ceremony be omitted or varied, it is supposed that the cows of the tribe will become dry, or die; and this, amongst a people who feed, it may be said, on milk, would be equivalent to a famine.

Living thus ever, the Hababs in general are one of the finest races I ever saw, both male and female—the men being European or Arab in feature, handsome, well-formed, muscular, and graceful; the women beautiful and seductive in appearance and manner. Indifferent as is the morality of Abyssinia, that of the Habab country is still more in a singular state, at least as regards the cardinal virtue of chastity.

The unmarried girls are preserved from early irregularities by strict precautions, but they indemnify themselves after marriage for all restraint. What distinguishes this tribe from almost all others, is the absence of jealousy in the husband, insomuch as he permits his wife a perfect liberty, taking only her gains. A disease, that probably

is as great a check to European lasciviousness as many precepts, is, I believe, almost, if not quite, unknown amongst them. It is the only country almost in this part of the world in which good figures are common amongst the women,—in Abyssinia almost unknown, better amongst the Gallas, and still more frequent here.

For dead people of consideration they cry for a year and a month, sometimes longer. Every morning, a circle of women, seated in the open air, commence with a low chant in honour of the deceased; presently they become excited, when one or more bound out and begin some most extravagant leaps, curtseying at the same time to the ground, with vociferous cries. These movements express the frantic grief they are supposed to feel.

The Hababs, as I have already mentioned, have become Mahomedans within the last hundred years, and all, save the latest generation, bear Christian names, as do also the Abyssinians. They have changed their faith, through the constant influence of the Mahomedans with whom they trade, and through the gradual, and now entire, abandonment of the country by the Abyssinian chiefs, too much occupied in ceaseless wars with their neighbours.

I cannot help thinking that the efforts of missionaries might have been better directed in so favourable a quarter, than in wasting their energies in sectarian squabbles with the priesthood of Abyssinia, who are vain and numerous, and who resist to the death any interference that might open the eyes of the multitude to their own general turpitude. The Catholic mission is beginning now, perhaps too late, to turn its views in that direction, having found Abyssinia a hopeless and impracticable attempt. It is certain that were the settlement of a European Power on the coast possible, it would not be difficult *now* to persuade all these tribes to return to their ancient faith; it is more certain that, in fifty years hence, Mussulman

fanaticism and habit will have obliterated all its traces, and thousands of souls will swell the numbers of Islam.

Then, even to the northward, the ancient limits of Abyssinia, from Gondar to Kartoom, have been lost from the grasp of the tottering successors of Fasil and Yasso, and, with the territory, its original religious faith. Kaffa, cut off by the inroads of pagan Gallas, has forgotten all but the mere name of the creed it still longs for. Shoa, separated from its kindred realms by other hordes of Gallas, has become a kingdom, in default of a king that should, as before, hold it as a province. The whole coast of the Red Sea has been so completely wrested from the Abyssinians, that the memory of their loss is only preserved by the learned. A Galla by birth, Ras Ali, is now the highest ruler in the kingdom, who having adopted Christianity in deference to his subjects, and from policy more than faith, the relics of the once great empire await only either an European war, that shall leave the Turks leisure to consummate their long-meditated conquest, or the general adoption of firearms (already commenced) by the Galla, to lose together their name, faith, and independence. I leave others to comment on these things. If the great, but falsely great, doctrine of non-interference is to prevail—which in most things I take to mean, 'Let us take care of ourselves, and let our children do the same,' being one step back to barbarism—why, let Abyssinia share the fate of many nations, and disappear from the earth. But should it be thought better to lend a helping hand to the little good that exists, than to begin afresh a hopeless contest with the pagan and Mahomedan conquerors, an effort might still be made; but we must approach them, for they cannot approach us; and daily and weekly communication would effect that, imperceptibly, for which individual humanity and generosity would now in vain lavish their labours or their wealth.

On descending into the valley of the Ansuba from Asaguddee Bukla, you at once find a race calling themselves Arabs, under the authority, more or less established, of the Pacha of Sennaar, and of the Kabyle of Beni Ameer, extending from Sowakim to the Takazzee or Gasch, under various names,—viz. Hirandowa, Hallenga, Haddenda, Tokur, &c.—and to the borders of Hamazain, in the valley of the Marubb (or Barka), by the name of Alee Bukeet. Of all these, few speak the Teegray language, a corrupt Arabic being their dialect. These tribes have vast numbers of camels, goats, and sheep, and their habits are, in great measure, those of the Arabs of Arabia Deserta; but they are infinitely less daring, being a bastard race, and notorious, according to their neighbours, for treachery and falsehood. I will not say that I can verify that character; but I heard from several sources that an attack on myself was planned, and indeed, I regarded with some inward suspicion the numbers of armed men that continually passed to and fro, with apparent indifference; and a chief that came to sell me a dromedary was, it appears, to decide if the plunder was feasible.

I behaved to him, it seems, in a manner that made some impression, and he, on his return, insisted on all such thoughts being abandoned. A strict guard at night was always kept by me here. I believe that the only safe character in which a European could visit these tribes, is that of an elephant-hunter, with a couple of trusty servants. If successful, as they eat the meat of the animal, and know nothing of guns themselves, they would naturally look to their own profit, and would probably feed him luxuriously and allow him perfect liberty. This character my time and other occupations would not permit me to adopt. It was not, however, without pain, that I found my duties incompatible with

the journey I could thus have performed, perhaps to Kartoom.

I returned up the valley of the Ansuba, at this season dry, with water every five or ten miles, sometimes wells, occasionally a spring. If I might judge by the tracks, lions and rhinoceroses are plentiful indeed. I only saw one of the latter, which I wounded; but it escaped in the darkness. The lions prowled around us nightly, but appeared to affect cows rather than men. We were obliged to be very watchful on this river, which is a kind of neutral feeding-ground, and much frequented by the robbers of Maira and Hallal. There is much dense jungle along the stream, and there being no traffic, a profound silence makes the scene more wild and mournful.

The names of Devra Groob and Devra Mai, lofty hills rising from the valley of the Ansuba, signify the Christian occupation of the country formerly; *Devra*, in the Geez, signifying mountain, and given generally to hills considered holy—as, Devra Zayt, Mount of Olives; Devra Sina, Mount Sinai. The names of Maira Kaia and Maira Tsuleem, signifying 'Mary fair' and 'Mary dark,' derive their appellations from churches erected there in honour of the Holy Virgin. The habits of these tribes, and of the country of Hallal, may be described as resembling those of the Hababs. In the Hallal district, only one half have hitherto become Mahomedans; and being a numerous tribe, they resist by force the incursions of Oobeay, or of the Turks from Taka; whilst the two Mairas are submitted generally to Sennaar, and being distant suffer little from Oobeay.

Farther up the valley of the Ansuba, the countries of Senhait, Beleyn, and Mugaira lead to the range of hills terminating the northernmost portion of Abyssinia, actually subject to the Teegray chief, as Adebaro, Ade Neffas, Dembijan, &c., whose manners, customs, and

languages are still those of Teegray, and who have fixed habitations, though their cows wander in search of pasturage to the neighbouring low country as the rainy season is favourable. To the west and south-west of Hallal is the valley of the Marubb, or the district, as it is called, of Barka.

After descending, viâ Senhait or Dembijan, to Barka, the country is a wide plain, covered with trees, particularly the forests that cover the course of the Marubb, a river far larger than the Ausuba, though of a similar nature—dry in the hot season, and a raging torrent in the rains; but still more abounding in wild beasts, and only yielding in expanse to the third stream, still more westerly —the boundless Takazzee. I say boundless, not with reference to its waters, which also are interrupted in the dry season, but to its expanse of forest waste, immense and impenetrable jungle, called by the Arabs *Tchaaba.* Here is the great breeding-place and refuge of elephants at all periods of the year, and here also revolted Arabs easily find safety from the Turks of Taka and the valley of Gasch, where they have several small military stations. The Takazzee, it is needless to say, runs into the Blue Nile, before its junction with the White Nile.

Barka was also under their authority until the last two years, when the chief of the tribe of Alee Bukeet (Mahomed Walled Bed), smarting under the insolence and even outrage of a Turkish officer, sent to collect tribute, massacred him and his troop of fifty men, and threw himself into the arms of Oobeay, the Teegray chief, with whom till now a firm friendship has been sworn and kept. Mahomed does not fear the Turks, but only his own relative and feudal superior, Diglul, chief of the Beni Ameers. This man, after defying the Turks for many years, either in open war, or by retreating to the Habab territory, was at last delivered up to them by the Hababs,

at the instigation of the Naib of Arkecko, and is now an honourable hostage, his name and influence being successfully used to retain the Arabs in subjection.

The chief of the Alee Bukeet makes incursions into the countries of the Shankallas, taking the inhabitants for slaves, selling them principally at Sowakim and Massowah, and hunting the cameleopard, and other beasts that are found there in abundance. These negroes, in return, render the road between the Marubb and Takazzee dangerous, killing all whom they find themselves strong enough to attack, and giving no quarter except to women and children. They occupy the Marubb also for a short space between the Alee Bukeet and the Abyssinians of Serowee or Hamazain, and at one spot there is a market in Hamazain, to which they resort in safety by mutual agreement.

The country of the Shankallas forms a narrow strip of land between the Arabs and Abyssinia proper, and extends to the Galla country, uninterrupted only for a short space at the point where the arms of Egypt have conquered nearly to Gondar. They are a fierce and numerous race, at constant and implacable war with the Abyssinians, and who scarcely succumb to the fiery weapons of their more civilised adversaries.

The Shankallas are powerfully made from the waist upward, like all negro races, and very swift of foot, scarcely ever using beasts for riding; they use the two-edged straight sword common in all this part of Africa, except Abyssinia, and are bloodthirsty to a degree, although in this respect I cannot say that their so-called Christian neighbours are any ways inferior to them.

The Shankallas, though bloodthirsty, never mutilate the person of the fallen, and, strange to say, except in a *mêlée* of large numbers, they have this chivalric feeling, that two will not attack one, but cast lots for the

adventure; the other looking on at the attack and combat, even if it ends in his comrade's defeat and death, with perfect indifference. Their chief food is meat and wild honey, with which their country abounds; in the rainy season they live often in caves, where large fires are lighted night and day, and never move from them. Many caves are capable of containing a whole village, and in them they often take refuge from the attacks of the Abyssinians, who, however, seldom venture into the country except in large force.

There are many roots in their districts that are excellent food in case of need. I have eaten of many of them freely. These the Shankallas on the borders are constantly digging up, living also on the carcases of the elephants, slain by the Abyssinian hunters, which they dispute with the lions. Those in the interior have flocks and herds, their sheep being very fat, and also a small and very fierce race of dogs.

They eat commonly also snakes of all kinds, cutting the head off. When alone in the jungle, a Shankalla fills the large gourd he carries with him with water and wild honey, lights two immense fires, roasts his snake on the embers, and having gorged himself, stretches out his naked limbs between the fires without further care till morning; on awaking, he drinks the contents of the gourd, well fermented by the heat, and starts off in search of man or beast to kill. In spite of the fires, the lions not unfrequently seize them.

The Shankallas have a singular prejudice against making any attacks at night, though one would imagine it would be most favourable to them. The Abyssinians, who are acquainted with their habits, keep a strong guard only till evening, and from daylight in the morning. The Shankallas also never start on an expedition without consulting the birds, whose chirping they suppose themselves

able to understand; and if a bad omen encounters them on the road, they will quit the prey even if in sight, and return for the day. The elephant-hunters of Abyssinia, who hunt on these borders, have the same notions, and, moreover, will only descend from their hills into the jungle below, for seven days at a time. These men are active, daring, good shots, and betwixt wild beasts and Shankallas, lead a life of a most exciting nature, to which, however, from habit they become indifferent. In the Shankalla country, elephants, rhinoceroses, buffaloes, lions, cameleopards, and ostriches abound, besides half a dozen large kinds of antelopes.

The countries of Beleyn, Senhait, and Mugaira, known to the Abyssinians generally as Moghos, have the same ambiguous religious faith as Hallal. Being plains, and richly cultivated with Indian corn, they are the favourite field for the incursions of Oobeay's troops, affording the most spoil with the least fighting. Mugaira is, I think, the most northerly spot where a church actually still exists, but I am pretty sure that there are now no priests.

To the southward of these countries the lofty mountain ranges of Adebaro, Ada Neffas, &c., may still come under the definition of Teegray, and the inhabitants still call themselves Christians, and pay tribute to the governor of Hamazain. On leaving Beleyn, the inhabitants of Bijook are the first that show strong marks of their relationship to Teegray, in having fixed habitations, whereas all the other tribes I have described have adopted the wandering habits of the Arabs.

In Memsah, also, the two towns of Bayt Islaka and Bayt Ibrahim are found. This country has a moderate height of 1,500 to 3,000 feet above the sea-level, and its climate is most delightful; and not being more than ninety or one hundred miles from Massowah, it would be a magnificent refuge from the heat of the summer months.

The roads to it from the side of the sea are through defiles that a hundred men might defend against an army—one up the course of the torrent that descends at Lawah, and one from Assoos and Gedged. There are some fine pieces of table-land at the top, and mountains of bold and singular outline.

The inhabitants, governed, or pretended to be governed, by two countries, find it exceedingly difficult to discover their own religion, and are employed in alternately sending a humble present of cows to Oobeay, or running away from the spoliation of the Naibs. Naturally, in such a state of things, cultivation is generally impossible, and commerce is only carried on to supply the necessities of existence; but what these countries might yet become in better hands, I leave the reader to judge from my description. That they most rapidly—and even Abyssinia proper and central, slowly—are falling to the lowest state of decay, probably to end in utter barbarism, with the complete extinction of the Christian faith, and the faint embers of civilisation that still glow here and there, is a melancholy and most certain truth.

The Shihos, a nomad race to the southward of Massowah, occupy the nearest roads into Abyssinia, and demand money to act as guides—that is, for permission to pass. They are nomads, independent, and are governed by certain institutions of their own common agreement, that answer very well for a poor and not numerous people. They are fanatical Mahomedans, without exception. They are divided into two large tribes, Tora and Assowarta. The former, who occupy the country between the Bedouin and Hamazain, do not claim to be guides. The boundary of the Assowarta is a brook, which is the straight and nearest road to Abyssinia by Dixa and the Taranta mountain, and they alone act as guides. On each side of the brook, lofty mountains shut out the sun

for a great portion of the day, and on these mountains roam their flocks and herds. This road is almost the only one in use by the merchants of Abyssinia. The floods in the rainy season in Abyssinia—about July, August, and September—pour down this narrow ravine with frightful violence. Frequently, deceived by the fineness of the day, merchants, while cooking their meals in the brook, have perished with all their goods; for, from the first thunder that signals their approach, few seconds elapse ere the raging waters sweep down in tumult, rolling over rocks and huge trees in their might.

The distinguishing trait of the Shiho character is dishonesty—that is, they steal all the cattle they can, and boys and girls are regularly kidnapped by them for sale at Massowah; all which facts they do not in the least conceal, saying (a saying that is the curse of all this part of the world, and considered all sufficient), 'it was the custom of our fathers.'

Their fathers have also considerately handed down to them another custom sufficiently vexatious to the traveller, and that is begging; and this not only by those in want, but by the whole nation, chiefs and all. With all this, they are sacredly faithful to their trust in guiding you, and neither steal, nor permit others of their tribe to steal from you, in transit. If you send by them letters or property, they are faithfully delivered. They live almost entirely on traffic, depending on Abyssinia at certain seasons for their grass, and on Massowah for much of their food, and they are, generally, sufficiently reasonable; but their neighbours in the south-west of Massowah, the Taltals (in which are included, by language, the Dankali, occupying the coast from Ansley Bay to Edd, farther south), are a wicked and treacherous race. In manners and customs scarcely anything distinguishes them from the nomad races I have described. They resemble the

Shihos in many points, as in religion, and indeed it must be obvious to the reader that the whole of these tribes have one common origin. The language of the Taltals is distinct, whereas that of the Shihos bears, I believe, a great affinity to that of the Adaiel, much farther to the south. This race is at enmity with all men : no merchants pass their inhospitable borders, no strangers visit them, and even the elephant-hunter dreads them. The Abyssinians that need salt there, cut it under the protection of a large armed force, and even the few that have occasionally established a slight intercourse with them, recount fearful tales of their cool treachery and thirst of blood.

The immense plains of salt and sulphur, apparent even on the surface, supply all Abyssinia, and the Gallas nearly to the equator. The sulphur is impure, nor do the Abyssinians know how to purify it ; but it might be collected in large quantities, and will be so if European enterprise and capital ever meet with that efficient encouragement which an establishment at Massowah can alone afford. The salt is dug out by stakes, and split into oblong pieces of eight or nine inches in length, two in breadth, and one-and-a-half in depth or thereabouts. This is carried away by men, girls, donkeys, mules, &c., and forms the whole current money of the Amhara country beyond the Takazzee. In Teegray it is too plentiful necessarily to be used much as a medium of exchange, 200 and more being the value of a German crown. In Waggera and at Gondar, from loss, breakage, and the infinitude of tolls, it is reduced to sixty, and sometimes thirty. In Gojam I have seen the exchange as low as fifteen pieces, usually from that to thirty. In the Gallas it is from eight to fifteen, and there, from its value, each lump is subdivided into sixteen minute slices, to enable the proprietor to make a number of small separate purchases. This article is there so prized, that all the children tie a

little lump at their girdles, they which suck from time to time as we might sugar or honey; nor is it every one that can afford to flavour his dishes with it. The salt is tolerably pure and strong, much stronger than that collected in the salt-pans nearer the sea, and called *boorree* by the Abyssinians, from the name of the spot, situated in the Dankali country between Ansley Bay and the Red Sea. This is consumed entirely in Teegray, and does not cross the Takazzee.

The Abyssinians make frequent incursions into the Taltal country, not always with success; though Sabagardis, possessing the advantage of having a Taltal mother, reached the sea at the bottom of Ansley Bay, where the stones and mounds raised by the Taltals to shelter them from his horsemen were shown to me. Sabagardis also built a church in that district, now abandoned. The Taltals are a powerful race, eating no corn, living like the Hababs on meat, milk, and honey, and are swift of foot, never riding any kind of beast. They have plenty of camels, and are far richer in flocks and herds than the Shihos.

The Dankali country is generally much more favoured by rain than the rest of the coast. I saw there some magnificent pasturage, and the fattest cows and sheep I ever met with out of England. Their country is a level plain, the haunt of ostriches, wild asses, gazelles, and (in the rainy periods) elephants; but the lion never ventures there from the hills, and consequently the cattle feed throughout the night as well as day. There is no stream, but wells of different depths, and sometimes brackish. The elephants kneel down and drink out of these, and sometimes a herd encompasses a well two or three days, driving away the inhabitants, who, indeed, never strive for the mastery. In the hot season these plains are even hotter than the neighbourhood of Massowah, and the glare of the salt-pans is painful to the eyes.

The upper and lower Taltals are ungovernable, brave, and preserve their independence, being regarded as implacable by Christians and Mahomedans alike. The Dankalis on the coast pay a small tribute to the Naib of Arkeeko, and are more favourably disposed to strangers. During my visit, the Taltals of Herto were feeding their camels there, and their eyes glared on us, and they bit their lips, at the sight of Christians daring to visit their country, to become acquainted with its wells.

CHAPTER II.

ABYSSINIA PROPER.

CHRISTIAN ABYSSINIA—ORAL TRADITION—THE KIBRA NEGUST—MENELEK—MAHOMEDAN INVASION—MAHOMED GRYNE—DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE—THE FITHA NEGUST—THE RAS—DEJAJ OOBEAY—DEJAJ BOURROO—TEEGRAY AND ITS SUBDIVISIONS—SEMEN—GONDAR.

THE noble portion of territory still in the possession of the Christians of Eastern Africa, is blessed with a climate that may, perhaps, challenge a comparison with any in the world. Its ordinary temperature is from 50° to 80°, but it contains, within its small extent of a few hundred miles, the variations of heat and cold that are usually found only in portions of the globe which are distant from each other. A few hours' ride will take you from the burning valley of the Takazzee, or the agreeable warmth of the country of Kwolaggeria, to the frost and hail-covered peaks of Semen; again a short road, and the bleak and wind-swept plains of Waggera will remind you of the Sussex Downs in March: by the slightest change, in fact, you may obtain a residence within a degree of the wished-for temperature, be it that of Italy, England, or Bengal.

The tropical rains, in most provinces, continue for three months or thereabouts—that is July, August, and September—but in some, particularly in Gojam, for nearly a month more, before or after that period. They are not of great violence, and interrupt the communications of the country, rather from the want of bridges across the innumerable streams, the pride and beauty of the country

in the fine season, than from the severity of the weather. Nor is the drought of the hot season so intense as elsewhere: occasional showers relieve the ground, and beautiful rivulets meander in all directions, resembling the trout-streams of England, along whose banks the pasturage is ever verdant, and where the dark foliage clusters, and shelters the traveller from the scorching sun.

The fertile soil, variable as its climate, is fitted perhaps for almost every production of nature. Many kinds of grain that are grown here, forming the principal food of man, are unknown in Europe; whilst of the productions of the latter, many are here cultivated, and the rest only require introduction, and the fostering care and talent of a people more skilful and energetic than the present owners of the land, to return a hundredfold to the cultivator. Tea would no longer be the exclusive property of China; its coffee is already admitted to be superior to that of Arabia; the vast plains round the Lake Tsana are adapted for the growth of rice, which is found there, indeed, in a wild state, as is also the sugarcane. Indigo grows wild, large tracts are everywhere adapted to all the spices of the tropics, cotton is the staple of some provinces; in several parts, as in Aijjo, the soil gives two crops of corn in a year; and where misrule and the endless wars of Abyssinia have checked the hand of man, nature produces wild fruits and vegetables in abundant profusion.

The variety and beauty of the plants that luxuriate in these wilds, present an endless field of interest to the researches of the botanist and florist, and many a root and leaf of strong medicinal virtue, or perhaps valuable as a dye, would repay the investigation of the scientific explorer. *Teff*, to the Abyssinian what wheat is to us, is the universal food of the country, and grown almost everywhere, except in the coldest portions, where barley is the great staple; wheat, oats, wild and cultivated, millet,

dagoosa (linseed root), from which oil is produced, and maize of several kinds, luxuriate in the valleys; peas, beans, *dennich*, a species of potato, scarcely cultivated, red pepper, large and small, with edible roots and plants of numerous kinds, totally neglected save in a season of distress—these all grow with the lightest care and labour. The inroads of locusts are almost confined to Teegray, and although a blight in other provinces occasionally distresses the country, it is but seldom. A comparison between the extensive and almost incredible quantity of waste land, and the ordinary cheapness of corn, will give the strongest idea of the richness of the land; the support of one individual, for two years in a favourable, and one year in an unfavourable, season of corn, may be purchased for one dollar, notwithstanding the occasional ravages of locusts in Teegray, and although probably not one-hundredth part of the soil is cultivated.

Among fruits, the peach and the plum are found in abundance, and vineyards of the most excellent grapes, producing, even with the rude process of the Abyssinians, a wine equal to good French claret, thrive in all the warmer regions.

Over the vast and luxuriant grass plains of Gojam, and the borders of the Lake Tsana, roam innumerable herds of cattle, chiefly the property of a nomadic tribe, whose sole home is where they find pasturage for their herds; and everywhere graze the horse, the mule, the ass, and the wild deer, with which nature has stocked her parks,—all rejoicing in an air so fresh and exhilarating, as would strike with wonder and delight the European, accustomed to connect the word Africa with the idea of barren aridity.

Nor would the labours of the mineralogist be less rewarded. The country is one vast iron-mine. The unskilful workmen, entirely ignorant of any process of mining, pick up the rough ore lying in profusion on the surface,

and manufacture their soft and badly-tempered swords, spears, bits, &c. from it. Gold and copper exist, and the scientific observer, after overcoming the jealousy of the natives, would doubtless discover other and valuable substances. Saltpetre abounds, while the sulphur is all brought from the country of the Taltals, where there is a rock or mountain formed almost entirely of that material.

The enthusiastic zoologist might spend a lifetime, without exhausting the treasures of natural history that abound in every forest, in every leaf, in each rivulet; birds of brilliant plumage unknown to Europe; insects rare and beautiful; of the deer kind some twenty species to be found in at least no English museum; the *tokola* (of which I believe one living specimen was sent to Captain Haines by Mr. Parkyns), of the wolf tribe, at whose voice even the lion and the elephant tremble; the *faro*, of the hyæna kind, yet differing greatly; the red jackal; an animal called the *wabbo*, dangerous, and difficult to kill, of which so many accounts are given, as to render it impossible, with certainty, to say more than that it is of the panther tribe, and the river cow (not the hippopotamus)—these are some few of the hundreds that merit the researches of science. In the deep valleys and jungles, untrodden by the foot of man, of the Nile, the Takazzee and the Bachillo, exist numerous species unknown even to the Abyssinian. The province of Walkait, unexplored by Europeans, and traversed by Mr. Parkyns alone, abounds in serpents and in every species of animal life; the elephant, the giraffe, the lion, the rhinoceros, and the buffalo, roam through those deep forests, with the Shankalla or Negro of those countries, whose hand is against every man; the wild ass and the black panther are found in other parts.

The ichthyology of the rivers and the Lake Tsana is so curious as to strike the most ignorant observer, and has not even been attempted.

I who have beheld these objects without understanding them, or have followed them only in the excitement of the chase, can conceive what proud delight would be his who, with a mind perceptive of the splendours of nature, should be the first to transport, and to make known to his native land, so noble and striking a collection.

Of large timber, in the territories of the Christians, there is little; but in the country of the southern Gallas, on crossing the Nile, the aspect of things is much changed; the tree called the *berbeesa* abounds, and gives the effect, from the absence of the thorny jungle of Abyssinia, of a well-preserved park. Ebony is found, however, in the low valleys, and numerous woods adapted for domestic purposes—as, a species of box, the bamboo, light canes, a wood of rare lightness used for rafts, called *tonkwas*, and numerous other species meriting examination. There is alsothe tree *gerowah*, whose bitter flowers are used as a remedy for intermittent fever; the *coso*, universal as the disease against which it is employed, the tapeworm; the *misamah*, whose bark serves the same purpose; the great sycamore, and a species of cedar, growing around the churches. I thus slightly notice the nature of this country, and indeed of the whole tract of mountain land stretching nearly to the equator, and falling off on every side to the low tracts inhabited by the black races, and whose rivers all fall into the Nile, to show that it is worthy of more notice than has hitherto been bestowed on it. I shall more particularly dilate upon these points in another page, and pass on, for the present, from the land where beauty has been so lavished by the hand of nature, and on which I might be tempted to dwell too long, to its occupiers, who, more by their apathy than their vices, have made it, as far as in them lay, a howling wilderness.

The oral traditions of Abyssinia extend little further

back than 200 years, and even those of the time of Ras Michael (eighty years since), are already surrounded with a mass of falsehood and exaggeration. Thus the memory of their heroes enjoys but a short immortality, perishing almost with the generation in which they sprang. The written tradition or history is very imperfect, and the grandeur of their kings, with the nature of their government, is overwhelmed with monkish tales and superstitions, and the lives of saints, foreign or domestic, or such romances as that of the 'Serpent-king at Axum,' which is preserved in a work in the church.

The *Kibra Negust*, however, or Register of Kings, though few of the Abyssinians now take much trouble in perusing it, is preserved and carried on in a loose fashion in Axum, Gondar, Shoa, and Erbashatawha in Teegray. This is said to commence from the time of David, and amid the rubbish of invented fables, or imperfect and incoherent statements, much interesting and valuable lore might doubtless be extracted by the learned and critical philologist and antiquary—possibly, in throwing light on the reputed visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon, or the gold of Ophir lavished on his temple. The task would be tedious, and the difficulties of either obtaining a copy, or constant access to the original, would be great, but not insurmountable.

In all these traditions, oral and historical, we do not find in Abyssinia traces of those violent and enthusiastic persecutions for the cause of religion, of popular movements, of laws that strive by severity to enforce morality, of the spread of education, or of the great attempts at war or conquest that are found in almost all other races that have arrived at an equal pitch of civilisation. They seem to have been governed with the same *insouciance* and careless ease by their Emperors, though with more order, as they now are by the last successful chief. Their

grandeur is almost forgotten and little regretted, and their downfall—of which the first stroke was struck by Mahomed Gryne, and the finishing act, that broke the spirit of habitual obedience, accomplished, when Ras Michael hung, by a cambric sash, one of the imperial race—may be attributed to the same light and frivolous nature, assisted by their daily increasing vice and indolence. When the above-named fierce and brave warrior carried fire and sword, in the name of the Prophet, from the shores of the Red Sea to the neighbourhood of Gondar, lighted by the flames of holy churches, and preceded by thousands driven from their homes in nakedness and misery, we find tradition of no Caractacus, of none who died for their country or their hearths, of no Standard of the Cross, no holy abbot or ascetic monk rousing even the coward and the decrepit to seek death as the curtain of Paradise. That daring chief, who fought and conquered with the energy, if not the fortune, of an Alexander, far from his native soil, is pictured in their churches and distorted in their tales to a monster scarce human; and but faintly and imperfectly do they recall the bold strangers (the Portuguese), who, as with Heaven's thunderbolt, crushed that terror of the land, though they still show a tree deeply marked with the sword-stroke given by the despairing giant in the last mortal pang; and thus also, when Ras Michael murdered the scion of the house of David, though the name of the royal family was made use of for some years by contending chiefs, we hear of none of those loyal hearts that, led by their own generous feelings, in other lands rally round the worst of kings for the memory of his fathers.

The *Kibra Negust* is said to have been continued from the time of Menelek the son of Solomon; the legend relating to whose birth will be found in a subsequent chapter, and from whom the present Emperors claim

their descent in a direct line. From this epoch the *Kibra Negust* is said to have been preserved with the utmost care, the *Lick*, or 'judges of the books,' being appointed, with many inferior officers among the priesthood, and scribes, to continue these records from time to time. The Emperor himself, in his leisure hours, would listen to its records, and many royal hands have added to its pages. Their wars, their expeditions into the countries now possessed by the Gallas, the disturbances of their reigns, the extent of their empire—sometimes including Sennaar, and indeed all the coast of Africa from Zanzibar to Nubia, and from the shores of the Red Sea to Darfour and Kordofan—are there said to be found, with the day and hour of the coronation and death of the kings. The obelisk and stones at Axum, and a stone excavation built in chambers, and believed, by the ignorant population, to be the work of Satan, are mentioned in these records as the work of artists sent from Egypt, in what epoch I was not informed; but as these remains have been the objects of constant curious research, the omission is probably supplied in the works of others.

The first event that disturbed the serenity of the empire was an irruption of Mahomedans, driving the Christians in from the coast of the Red Sea, and ravaging as far as the neighbourhood of Axum, where their chief is said to have been slain by an arrow, and his burial-place is pointed out by the learned. On this occasion the church of Axum was burnt, and the records were carried away, on the flight of the Emperor, to Medebei Tabor, a fortress or *geddam* situated in an isolated mountain, shooting out of the valley of the Marubb into a thousand rugged and fantastic pinnacles, with but few and easily defensible approaches. After this the seat of government was removed to Aijjo, and again to Shoa, when the King, Atna Lebna Dingel, tired of long years of peace,

impiously, it is said, besought Heaven for a foe worthy of his lance. The request was listened to, and the famous Mahomed Gryne well answered the vainglorious boast. He is said to have been the son of a Christian priest of Aijjo, who had left his country, and adopted the Mahomedan faith in that of the Adals, and that he was raised from obscurity and the humble occupation of a weaver, by a special messenger from Heaven, to punish the proud Emperor. This last, on first hearing of the revolt, sent but a few thousand troops to seize the rebel: these being defeated, and Mahomed Gryne, by his personal strength and daring, enlisting the whole country in his favour, the high officers of the state, with the whole force of the empire, were sent against him; and these also meeting the like fate, the Emperor fled to Mariam Waha, on the frontiers of Bellasa, and Waggera. From thence, hearing that his fated enemy was approaching, he again escaped into Teegray, where he died, it is said, in the *geddam* of Devra Damo, a strong monastery in the possession of monks, and rendered impracticable on all sides by a smooth perpendicular rock of about 60 feet, save by a rope drawn up from above. His son, the Emperor Claudius, calling in the assistance of the Portuguese, with the aid of their guns defeated the forces of Gryne in the neigbourhood of Devra Tabor, at a place now called Gryne Burr, their leader falling pierced with thirteen balls. The Portuguese thus avenged the fate of their own chief, and many comrades, whom Gryne had on a previous occasion defeated and slain.

Gryne's personal and moral courage must have been of the first order, as also his skill as a leader, shown in the devotion of his followers, who fought, far from their country, for years, under his guidance. The extent of country he ravaged and overawed in a short period was great. The church of Axum was again burnt, but the

records were saved by timely removal. Some years afterwards, in the time of the Emperor Socinios (who was deposed for adopting the Catholic faith), and his son Fasil, the government was removed to Gondar, where it remained, gradually becoming curtailed by the Gallas, by rebels, and by the abandonment of Sennaar, till the time of Ras Michael, about eighty years back; since which it has been almost entirely nominal, and the Great Mogul of Africa has been the fitting companion of the owl and the bat, in the deserted and crumbling castle of his ancestors. Still, if the tales of the *Kibra Negust* have any foundation, the present Emperor, though powerless, may claim a known descent from a race of kings, and from a more remote period, I imagine, than any now existing sovereignty in the world; and although he may obtain no merit from this involuntary fact, yet as the existing type of the world of ancient history, venerable from long age, and regarded with a religious awe, he may excite reflections that the more practical and more powerful thrones of Europe cannot rouse.

A further account of this work would of necessity involve a translation of it—a labour of years.

The *Fitha Negust*, or written law, said also to have originated in the time of David, has now become a mere form, even with the great judges that administered its dictates under the old Emperors, and who now, in poverty, still preserve the name; they are at the mercy of each powerful chief, who, in cases where his passions or interests are concerned, does not even trouble himself to appear to consult either the one or the other. The Acts of St. Michael and the other books of Ethiopia, principally consisting of monkish legends, of which we possess abundance already, may be procured for a little money, but, save as curiosities, can be little worth the search or the expense: as curiosities, indeed, the paintings with

which they are profusely ornamented, giving them the appearance of illuminated missals, and whose colours and conception are in many instances at least creditable, render them valuable.

The country now known as Abyssinia is but a small portion of the great royalty of Ethiopia, and the Emperor, the boasted descendant of Solomon, is now an old and feeble man, who (though still living in the fast-decaying castle of his ancestors), neglected and scarce heard of, has not the semblance of the shadow of a king. The territory that Fasil governed, well and wisely, is now a prey to the strongest; the spear and buckler have outweighed the law, and even the bigotry of their religion is daily losing its influence over the people, and their rulers.

The most powerful of their chiefs at present* is Ras Ali, the 'head,' as his name implies, of the whole realm. The Ras was formerly a species of 'Maire du Palais' of the Emperor; but since the time of Ras Michael, he has gradually usurped the sceptre and dominions of his master, much curtailed as these have become by inferior competitors, and the inroads of the warlike Gallas. The territory that he really governs comprises the central and most warlike and polished portions of Abyssinia, stretching from the borders of Sennaar to those of the Adaiel country. Dejaj Oobeay, who governs all the country to the northward, at present tacitly acknowledges his superiority, but is too powerful to be really his vassal, and any hour may bring the rupture of a peace too hollow to be lasting. To the southward, Dejaj Bourroo has, for nine years, denied his supremacy, and, though quite unable to face the Ras himself in the field, has contrived annually to defeat all the governors that he has successively appointed within the circle of the Nile, that river being the chief strength and boundary of the country of the so-called rebel.

* In 1844.

The mother of the Ras, who governs the district from Gondar to Sennaar, is necessarily of one interest with him; and from this sketch it may be seen that, though not an undisputed sovereign, he is yet the principal personage among the Christians of Eastern Africa.

The provinces under the government of Oobeay are Teegray, which includes all the Christians on the north side of the Takazzee, Semen, Waggera, Walkait, Kwolaggeria, Shorda, and Tegadel. The realm of Teegray, whose dialect is distinct from the Amharic, and most nearly allied to the ancient language of Ethiopia, and whose border is reached in three days from Massowah, was a powerful kingdom governed by its native chief, till invaded and conquered by Oobeay, assisted by Ras Mariée, the predecessor of Ras Ali. Its principal subdivisions are Hamazain, Serowee, Kaligooza, Agamee, Teegray proper, Shiré, Adiabo, Tembea, Inderta, Woggerat, and Siloa: its general level is from 5,000 to 7,000 feet above the sea; its climate is tolerably healthy, but subject at times to epidemics, the rains, from July to October, not very heavy generally; its soil in most parts remarkably stony, and the locusts frequently occasion a scarcity of corn.

The people of Hamazain and Serowee, since the time of Ras Michael, though speaking the same language, are still scarcely considered by the people of Teegray as a portion of that country, whose governors, since that period, have made war on them to enforce payments of an irregular tribute. They are indeed a fierce and turbulent race, though overawed by the unsparing severity of Oobeay.

Teegray is now almost universally acquainted with the Amharic language, and their customs, food, and dress have become so assimilated to those of the Amharas, as not to need a separate description, though their hatred of that people is undiminished. They are a race quick to

anger, but bearing little malice—eager, individually brave, faithful to their masters and their friends, with less ceremony and more heart than their neighbours—intending well, but wanting in the execution—united in their plan of action, but disunited in the battle. They are governed by men who are their inferiors in almost every quality.

On crossing the Takazzee, a large stream impassable in the rains, except to good swimmers assisted by rafts, you commence a succession of steep ascents into the high mountains of Semen, rising in parts to 15,000 feet above the level of the sea. This country, the birthplace of Oobeay, was first raised from the contempt of its warlike neighbour, Teegray, by the courage, dauntless and celebrated, of his father, Hilo Mariam, and now by his own political skill and singular good fortune. It is exceedingly cold in most parts, ice being almost continually found on the tops of the higher ranges. The people are generally robust, healthy, and long-lived, and famed in Abyssinia for their wily pleading.

The great road to Gondar passes, at one spot, through a single door, erected and defended, with a stockade, on a narrow communication between the hills, and can only be avoided by a day's journey, or more, on either side, after which gradual slopes take you into the province of Waggera. Here the climate is more moderate, but much colder than Teegray, owing to the bleak winds that sweep unimpeded over grass plains, slightly undulating, and almost destitute of trees, or even bushes, of a rich black soil, affording the most excellent pasture for cattle of every kind. These countries, at present thus slightly touched on (though often described by Europeans), will be more minutely noticed in some future page, wherever it may be necessary, from their connection with the general politics, productions, or trade of Abyssinia. At present, in descending from the heights of Waggera (2,000 feet) to

the lower country, which on all sides surrounds the great Lake of Tsana,—let the reader for an instant pause with me to behold Gondar, fallen, but yet imposing, when we consider that the scene is Africa, and the city the capital of a country even yet but little known.

The first thing probably that will strike the traveller in Abyssinia is the almost entire absence of high trees, except immediately surrounding the churches, which, built on nearly all the conspicuous elevations, become, from this fact, visible at great distances, and generally guide the wearied stranger to some hamlet in their neighbourhood. This, arising from the rank fertility of a burial-ground, is attributed by the Abyssinians to the hallowing influence of celestial visitants. The forty-four churches of Gondar are thus remarked, amid the towns composing it, which are built on several hills around the most holy and respected; another half-circle of higher hills encloses it on the northern side, and on the other side stretches away the Plain of Dembea, mingling mistily with the lake studded with islands, at whose farther end are faintly visible the mountains of the Agow country. Looking over the well-clad eminences, the eye falls upon a fine scene, where hill on hill, and valley on valley, are endlessly confused with pointed rocks, rising in parts in bolder relief, against the low countries bordering on Sennaar, which appears from the great distance but a level mist; the dark mass of the castle is just distinguishable from the brow on which you stand. The whole descent, now sheltered from the bleak gusts of Waggera, is thickly wooded, and birds of varied and brilliant plumage are glancing everywhere among the dark thorns.

Gondar, from the time of Fasil (now 216 years ago), became the abode of the Emperors of Ethiopia, after the abandonment of Shoa, consequent on the invasion of the Adal chief, Mahomed Gryne. The city became, at that

period, the centre of all the trade of the country, by the routes of Sennaar and Massowah, and is yet the most important and populous in Abyssinia. The principal relic left in the country is the castle, erected by the Portuguese at the desire of Fasil, the extensive walls and feudal towers of which present, indeed, a strange contrast to the low and humble huts by which they are surrounded, and produce a startling and almost unnatural effect. The dwelling of the descendant of the Queen of Sheba is a straw-covered hut, erected like a pigeon-house, in one of the angles of the structure; the summit of the highest tower is now unapproachable by the ruined staircase; the well where criminals were once thrown is emptied of its lining of sword-blades; the hall of Muntooab is desolate; the broad wall, over which the Emperor rode to chapel, that the earth might not soil his royal foot, is crumbling away; and the echoes of the spacious courts, where nations once bent the knee, are but rarely awakened.

Gondar is divided into several quarters, the principal of which are the Tchegee Bayt, or residence of the Tchegee, the most saintly of the priesthood; Kodus Gabriell, the residence of the Aboona or High Priest, sent by the Coptic patriarch; Deug Aggee (so called from its stony streets), the Mussulman quarter, whose chief is the Negadeh Ras, or head of the merchants, an officer of the Ras, who collects the duties, with other divisions whose inhabitants are more miscellaneous.

There is a small market daily, and the chief market on Saturday, when the concourse of people is great; and once a week, at the Mussulman quarter, a sale of mules and horses. To this part you descend a steep hill, and on a small grass-plain are the beasts, galloping and prancing about in every direction, in the utmost confusion. The purchasers, sitting on the ground, on observing any animal they like, call the rider, and on showing a few

dollars, are permitted a trial. The price of those sold are, generally, for a pretty good horse, from ten to twenty dollars, and for a mule from eight to fifteen.

Shops in Abyssinia there are none. If you require meat in the market, they daily slaughter bullocks, sheep at the Saturday market, and fowls are obtained by enquiring from house to house; all that you require for your household must be purchased at the market—firewood, butter, corn unground, honey, red pepper, salt, &c. &c.; all payments are made either in the German crown, or in the medium of the country—viz., pieces of salt.

The residence of the mother of the Ras, who now bears the title of Empress, from her marriage with a member of the royal family of Ethiopia, is in Gondar, and she is now re-erecting a fallen church, and a new quarter around it and her own dwelling—a tardy work of piety after a wanton and shameless life. On approaching her abode, you will see crowds of followers of the chiefs or men of rank, sitting or standing in groups, outside the wall of stones and mud that surrounds it—some shield-bearers, others gunners; men holding mules handsomely or meanly caparisoned, as the case may be; horsemen, perhaps just arrived with messages; and suppliants, who cannot obtain admittance, loudly crying their tale of woe, that it may perchance reach the royal ear—who have either some judge sent to them, or are driven away by blows. Turbaned priests, conspicuous by the whiteness of their clothing, and wretched beggars praying for alms, are also there; and perchance some man, once great—whose eyes have been extinguished by the order of her at whose door he is now sitting—pays his court to obtain a small pittance for the remnant of his days. Passing through the crowd of applicants for admission, and the small door, you find a court, and the house within of the same elegant material as the wall—one ground-floor or a

single storey. On the ground are, sitting or standing, groups of men, well-dressed, with some superior in the centre, behind whom, if a soldier, his shield, covered with silver and gold, is suspended on the wall; favourite slaves or eunuchs of the Empress, passing to and fro with whispered messages; while near the door, hung with cloth, two parties are pleading some cause, before a favourite of the Empress as judge, but within hearing of his mistress. Morning after morning do those who live in Gondar all sit here for an hour, to pay their court, and enquire after her majesty's health (though perhaps never admitted), which is duly reported by their *baldarabba*, or speaker, through whom also any petition or request is transmitted and answered.

CHAPTER III.

THE MILITARY CLASS.

THE RAS'S INSIGNIA AND HOUSEHOLD—COSTUME OF THE SOLDIERS—RESEMBLANCE TO THE FEUDAL TIMES OF EUROPE ILLUSTRATED—THEIR SONGS AND WARLIKE GAMES—THE RAS ON A CAMPAIGN—HIS OFFICERS, AND ORDER OF ENCAMPMENT—THE SOLDIER.

THE ABYSSINIANS approach nearly to the European in cast of countenance, with a somewhat stronger development of what are considered the animal features of the head and face. The men are neither so tall nor so physically powerful as the white races, but are capable of great endurance of fatigue, and of long journeys on foot; they are of all shades, from nearly black to the tint of the Hindoo; their hair curly, but not so woolly as that of the Negro; not well-limbed, though there are many exceptions, with faces and figures that would be accepted as handsome in any part of the world. The women are many of them beautiful, and some almost fair.

We may divide the men into four classes—the warrior, the priest, the merchant, and the husbandman—though not by caste, as in India.

The spoken languages are now four—the Teegray, the Amhara, and the two Agows. Of these, the Amhara is the most universal (though the Teegray approaches nearer to the ancient Ethiopian), and is spoken throughout the country, except in some remote provinces of Teegray.

The chief power being entirely military, the soldier

occupies the principal place; the Ras, and all the great men of the country, are of that class, and have absolute sway, with the exception of some privileges of the priesthood.

Save the Aboona, or High Priest, every individual in the country is the servant of the Ras, and their life and property are at his disposal; and though, for the sake of form, the *Fitha Negust*, or ancient code of laws, is displayed, and consulted, with great formality, on every occasion, the only real check on him is the necessity he may be under of conciliating the priesthood and the greater chiefs, who are formidable from their family influence, and the possession of hereditary mountain strongholds. The Ras has now no ensign of authority save the *negarete*. This consists of eighty-eight drums, loaded, two and two, on mules, with the drummer mounted behind, and always precedes him on the march, the drums beating. When this negarete is taken in battle, it is the signal of defeat. The post of danger is that of the chief drummer, who is never spared, and who has consequently many privileges. It is his office also to superintend all punishments ordered by the chief.

The country was divided, under the ancient emperors, into portions, whose limits were well known from long custom, each the appanage of authority to the great officers of state, so that the government of that territory (distinct from the right of soil, which is never disturbed), its revenues, and the privileges it conferred, were transferred with the office. Of these privileges, and the multifarious etiquette of the olden times, few remain; but the parcelling out of the country is not forgotten, and the number of mules of negaretes that the Ras bestows on any chief, with the shirt of office, is still regulated by that. The highest beat forty-eight drums, others twenty-four,

others twelve; all proclamations are made, by those in possession of the negarete, by beating the large drum, till a number of people are collected, when the order is repeated by the drummer, and those who hear, exclaiming 'May it prosper!' run to spread it from ear to ear; it is then law so long as he who passed it retains the power, or till he changes his mind, and no excuse of ignorance is admitted. The great chiefs are called *Dejajmatch*, and have the power of life and death in their provinces; they raise as many soldiers as they can afford to pay, and follow the Ras to war whenever he proclaims a campaign. This latter does not receive any fixed revenue from them, but quarters his soldiers on them, or demands horses, mules, honey, &c., as he may think fit; and as on these occasions the extra funds are extorted from the country-people, it matters little to the chief or to his soldiers.

The Ras's household and officers will describe that of every man in Abyssinia, in proportion to his means. After giving the provinces to his great chiefs, these again appoint their servants to smaller portions, who again appoint theirs to villages, and so on to the common spearman, who seeks nothing but his bread, and what fortune and his master's favour may bestow on him. The Ras then, reserving the largest and best portions of the land for himself, gives a certain number of *Devros* or churches, with the accompanying lands, to his officers and favourites. The principal of the former are as follows, viz.—The *Bellata Gaëta*, a species of prime minister, who acts for the chief in every point, issues orders for him, looks after the entire household, &c.; he is necessarily highly trusted, and has a proportional tract of country. The *Ajaz*, or (we may say) commissary-general, has the duty, whether in war or peace, of providing all food of every description for his master's use; he has also charge of all strangers, is the keeper of the tents, and chief of what is called the *Cerrus*

Beyt, or private establishment, consisting, in the Ras's case, of some thousands. The *Affa Negoos*, or 'mouth of the king,' hears and reports all litigious suits, petitions, &c. to the chief, who also sends his decisions through him; this post requires a man of great talent, quickness, and unscrupulousness. The *Fit-Aurari* of the Ras, or he who leads the advanced guard in battle, is one of the Dejajmatch, and, in the case of inferior chiefs, he is a favoured officer and friend. The *Chalika Zuffan-bet*, and *Zubaiqua Alika*, are the chiefs of the night and day guards, who watch in the open space that is always kept clear around the tent, or house, stopping all that attempt to trespass on it. The *Agafaria* guards the door or entrance, and on days of feasting, with the assistance of the *Zubaiqua Alika*, keeps order, and performs the office of seneschal in marshalling the guests according to their rank. The *Elfen Agafaria* guards the private apartments of the women, but has no control over the eunuchs of the great, who are too necessary to be dependent on any save the chief himself. The *Bashas*, or chiefs of the gunners, have each one hundred guns under their orders, and one general of the whole. Then there are the *Tejj Milkanea*, whose office is to provide the honey and materials for the intoxicating mead, which is the grand desire, nay passion, of every Abyssinian; the *Abasa*, or woman who makes it in the earthen jars; the *Gourbaiqua Alika*, head of the women who carry it on the march, to the number of 200; the grand butcher for slaughtering oxen, another for sheep and goats; the chiefs of the wood-cutters and grass-cutters, with numbers of minor offices, of which a list would be too tedious.

The force that the Ras considers his own, independent of the great chiefs, are the gunners, from 1,000 to 2,000; the *Seff Zagry*, whose leader has the sinecure office of sword-bearer, and is generally some soldier of renowned

courage, number some 1,500 to 2,000 picked spearmen; the *Zubaiquas*, above mentioned, about 1,000; the *Afellaigi* and *Ziganya*, composed mostly of men of some rank and note, and of distinguished bravery, all well mounted, who are paying their court, and from whose ranks from time to time he selects his favourites—perhaps 1,000. Besides these, numbers of *Mugozos*, or men not of the highest rank, but holding sufficient country to support 200 to 300 men, and the private following of the great officers above mentioned, altogether forming a sufficiently imposing force. In time of peace, that is during the rains, the greater part of these disperse, those who have villages or countries to their respective houses, while the soldiers are quartered upon the country generally, in a regular gradation. The whole of these, on leaving the Ras's presence, have the same officers and establishment, according to the scale of their means, and most, even of the common soldiers, have some small boy who does duty as a shield-bearer, or grass-cutter, and on whom he exercises his authority with as satisfied a vanity as the haughtiest of his superiors. In fact, the great natural characteristics of Abyssinia, from the highest to the lowest of the realm, are vanity and *insouciance*; and this in the warrior becomes almost a duty, with the addition of dandyism, sometimes of the foppish, sometimes of the ruffianly species, but as intense in degree as that of the most magnificent specimens in Europe

The dress of all classes is formed of the cotton cloth of the country, spun by the women, and woven by the hand-loom, principally by Mussulmans in the Teegray district; but ornamental cloths or calicoes, &c., purchased from the Massowah merchants, are worn by the rich. The dress of the soldier consists of a pair of trousers, either ending above the knee, or a short way below it, fitting close; a belt, varying in length from 30 to even 180 feet in some

instances of super-dandyism, and which, wound round the body, gives a most ludicrous appearance; and a cloth or kind of sheet, with a red border, if the owner be a gentleman. In most cases, the warrior prefers having this cloth as black and stained as possible, but of fine material; others are scrupulously clean, and the cotton bleached white as snow. The hair is dressed in a variety of fashions, which are regulated by his deeds of valour, and lavishly anointed with fresh butter. The sword, mostly worn on the right side, is fastened by the belt, so as to project at right angles behind; add a round shield of buffalo-hide, one or two spears, seven feet in length, and a small sheepskin over his shoulders, and the soldier is complete. Ordinarily, all these are in the most ragged condition possible—in fact, with the ruffianly dandy it is almost a point of honour that they should be so.

In going into battle the chief's array is imposing. The trousers and belt are inevitable, but in place of the cloth he dons a shirt, reaching to his thighs, with slashed and open sleeves of handsome silk; over this he sports a skin, either of the lion's mane (of great value, frequently sixty dollars), or of the peculiar breed of Galla sheep, black, or dingy red and white, with hair not unfrequently two feet in length; this is sewn round with red morocco, and ornamented and clasped with silver; on his right arm the *betoa*, a silver-gilt ornament enclosing the forearm; on his head the *kalicha*, a kind of silver coronet, with numerous drops of the same metal, lined with crimson velvet or silk; on the left arm a shield, covered with silver and silver-gilt handsomely wrought; his spears of the highest polish, and his sword, an European blade, the handle of rhinoceros-horn mounted with a knob of silver, the sheath of red morocco, with bands of silver at intervals, and a small crown at the peak. Thus accoutred, on a spirited horse, with a thousand followers more or less, well-dressed and

mounted, his *umbilta* (sweetly wild, even to an European ear) playing before him, the spectacle is warlike and exciting.

We are reminded of the feudal times, when the great barons were followed to war by all born on their lands, by lesser chiefs under their influence and protection, and by their followers. Allowing for the poverty of the country, and the less stern and ferocious character of its inhabitants, you have, in the military of Abyssinia, the picture of those times.

To illustrate this, let us take the case of a rebellious chief—say Bourroo Goscho, the chief of Gojam, who, on his father's soil, where all are devoted to him, and trusting to his mountain strongholds, defies the Ras. The latter in person takes the field against him. Bourroo retreats to his fortress, and the Ras, finding no enemy to encounter, ravages the country and returns—first, however, appointing governors to the conquered districts, but leaving no force to protect them. These, Bourroo openly announces his intention of driving back to their master. There is no lack, however, of young and aspiring chiefs, candidates for the post, the more anxious to measure their strength with the rebel as he is the more famous, and who boast (for humility is not their virtue) that they will lead him in chains to the royal footstool.

Choosing from among them, the Ras, by beat of drum, allots them their respective portions of territory, and names one of high rank their head—say Merso, a man of desperate valour, the best horseman in Abyssinia, the terror of Oobeay and of the Ras, alternately chained and freed, the brother of the one and the cousin of the other. Bowing to the ground his thanks for the honour, Merso quits the camp, and proclaims, 'Let all who love the *betoa*, well-caparisoned mules and horses, governments and mead,—let all brave warriors, follow me!' His name

attracts thousands to his banner, and in a few weeks he is at the head of an imposing army. Daily banquets take place, where the *doomfata* (or recital of their exploits), the warlike song, the praises of well-known heroes, with bitter sneers for the coward, recited by the minstrel, the neighing of war-steeds, and the relaxation of discipline, rouse and excite all to the approaching conflict.

There is something chivalric in their encounter, though much boasting in it. Bourroo sends to the Ras, from his mountain, a handsome lion's skin mounted in silver, and tells him to give it to the chief he leaves, and that he (Bourroo) is sworn to take it off his shoulders. When Merso is known to be the opponent, he sends him handsomely-ornamented trousers, the insignia of manhood, and bids him wear them when they meet in battle; while Merso forges the chain which is to bind the captive Bourroo. The names of their horses, for they are seldom called by their own, furnish the war-cry to their followers, and the song to the minstrel. That of Merso is Selpha, *i.e.* the lance of sharp-pointed wood used in battle, and particularly dangerous to horses. That of Bourroo is Dampto, or the leveller. They meet. Their war-cries mingle. The Asmaree minstrel, glowing with the praises of Merso's warlike feats, or warmed with his wassail mead, sings—

When Selpha is hurled, Dampto is wounded.

From mouth to mouth the phrase spreads, and reaches Bourroo's host, whence a rival minstrel responds and rhymes to it—

Where Dampto treads, Selpha is broken.

The retort is received with shouts of joy, and draughts of tejj. Thus stimulated, the fight goes on. At last the battle is won, and Merso flies; horsemen are in pursuit in every direction; all is confusion, and a hundred resolute men

might take the victorious chief prisoner, and change the fortune of the day. His tent is thrown open; important captives are brought in and chained; mead flows in abundance; the guns, which become the property of the chief, are brought in and piled before him by the captors, who perform their *doomfata*, and point to the disgusting trophies hung on their matchlocks, or on their horses' necks, as evidences of their courage. It may surprise some that such a practice should possibly exist in the same region where the Bible is supposed to be the law; but it is explained upon a principle that will explain much in Abyssinia,—that of the strong odour of Judaism still clinging to the nation and its customs.

The trophy itself is evidently a tradition of the war of the Israelites and Philistines. The Amharas say that the custom was learnt from the Gallas, and certainly in Teegray it did not exist anywhere till lately; but the notion that the slaughter of *armena*—that is, barbarians of all the nations known to them—is a thing rather leaning to virtue than the contrary, arises from the idea that, being Christians, God has given them this authority, as Canaan was handed over to the Israelites, by whom chiefs were hewed in pieces, whilst heaps of foreskins were counted by the proper officers, as may be seen to this day after an Abyssinian battle. In this matter, the word *armena* is taken from the Ethiopic word *armawee*, signifying 'Gentiles.' The soldiers exercise this barbarous custom on the plea of necessity of showing evidence of their deeds, the chief on the strength of custom. These trophies are usually thrown on each side of the entrance to the tent of the chief in two heaps, and removed the next day. All is tumult and joy. Boasting horsemen, hot from the pursuit, ride up; the victorious soldiers count their prisoners, and calling their comrades to witness, then strip and turn them adrift;

groups of women in every direction, those of the defeated party naked and weeping, of the other, filling the air with gleeful cries of triumph and songs of victory; the captured negaretes, now beating on the side of their late opponents, are delivered to the chief, and at every tent the *umbilta* pours forth its wild notes through the uproar of firing guns, the galloping of horses, and the songs and shouting. The next day all returns to its usual quiet, and the soldiers of the defeated have entered the service of different chiefs, and swell the army of the late foe, or depart, as they best can, naked and hungry. The women have found friends, relatives, or masters, and the hyænas and the vultures are alone left with the dead. The greater part of the slain are killed by the country-people, who always collect in force at their different villages, and most impartially murder and rob the fugitives of whichever party may be defeated. The peasant thus repays something of the insolence with which the soldier treats him on all occasions, and at the same time gratifies his love of gain by the addition of a horse, a well-caparisoned mule, a gun, &c. The flight, once commenced, is a headlong *sauve qui peut*—order, defence, and union being entirely lost, and a rally beyond a hope. And no one of the fugitives could probably afford the least explanation why his party was defeated, or he himself running away at such desperate speed.

The songs of Abyssinia are certainly not inferior to those of the old Jongleur or Provençal, and their singers are equal to the Highland harper or Irish bard, while the *umbilta* gives a sound that can be conceived as delighting the ear of man. The verses of lament, or praise of heroism, are pleasingly accompanied by the ten or six-stringed harp, and, though rude and simple, show a delicacy of ear and taste, still more evinced in the clear and natural tone of their vocal delivery, unaccompanied by that nasal

twang so much admired in nearly all nations save those of Europe. Many of their verses—particularly those used in weeping for the dead, on the miseries of war, or the fate of some renowned chief, and invented from time to time as events suggest them—possess a mournful tenderness and simplicity that is very pleasing. These principally owe their origin to the Gojamee, who in disposition, if more false to his master than other Abyssinians, is also of a more thoughtful depth of feeling, as evidenced by the numbers who, moved by sorrow for the death of a friend or brother, or excited by the vivid conception of eternal happiness, quit prosperity and wealth for the life of the ascetic, or the laborious pilgrimage to the tomb of Our Saviour. The heroic lay, again, is mostly due to the Wallo Gallas, where the Mungerash are indispensable to the establishment of the chief. These females wander from master to master, receive much and lavish more, and on the day of battle, even standing in the field, turn back the flying coward by their reproaches, or urge the brave to surpass their former valour. Their own persons are sacred from harm, as is also that of the male singer, who is contemptuously classed as a woman.

The favourite amusement of the Abyssinian chief and his followers is the *gooks* or *jereed*. It represents their system of fighting to the life, substituting blunt sticks for the pointed lances, and lives are not unfrequently lost. The right of single combat exists, though seldom claimed, for fear of blood-feuds, as, although justice cannot claim the victorious party, powerful relatives are not the less dangerous. A pastime, however, even more serious than our tournament exists in Aijjo and Lasta, which would show that those countries at least have a very wholesome contempt for life. It is called *Waffo Waggea*. On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, in every week, the aspiring youths mount and join battle on some appointed plain,

village against village, district against district, for the mere love of fighting, from morn to dewy eve. In these encounters the bravest and most distinguished warriors often fall, generally at the hand of some rival for the smile of beauty, as the Aijjo girl bestows her favour on the bravest, and claims certain privileges on public occasions for the deeds of her husband or her lover. Strangers, if they please, may join in the amusement, but are nearly sure to become victims, as the generosity of sparing the weak forms no part of the game; many horses are also killed. They separate, wishing each other mutually good evening, to renew the struggle on the morrow. The people of Aijjo live on bloodshed, and few men who have attained, with difficulty, the reputation of brave, live more than a year or two to boast of it. The rest of the Abyssinians attribute this and their constant fighting and broils to the curse of an Aboona.

When the Ras has determined on a campaign, he sends messages to all his chiefs to join him with their forces, and, by beat of drum, summons all soldiers who may be absent in country quarters. Having advised with the most powerful chieftains, as his force is very large, and it is almost impossible to find food for them in one camp after the first month or two, he generally sends some a day or two in advance, and orders them different routes, to keep particular provinces in check, or to protect his flanks and rear. His *Fit-Aurari* having marked the spot for the Ras's tent, passes on himself, and pitches his own some distance from it—say half a mile or a mile in front, but with its face turned in the direction of the next day's march. The Ras's tent is pitched at the designated spot, and a space of about 100 yards is kept clear on three sides (the front being left open), where his slaves, private cooks, dogs, and favourites, with the royal *Tejj Milkanea*, erect their little straw huts in a semicircle. He has also,

generally, five or six tents pitched for his favourite horses in the neighbourhood of his own. In front, a little to the right, so as not to exclude the view, encamp the *Cerrus Beyt*, or household, and the *Negaretes*; on the left, the guards, (*Zubaiqua*); on the right, the *Seff Zagry* or sword-bearers; in front of the *Cerrus Beyt*, at some distance, the gunners; and in the rear, closing in the tent, the *Ziganyas* and *Afellaigi*, chosen troops of horsemen. At a considerable distance in the rear, forming a large half-circle, are three or four great chiefs with the *Dejin* or rear-guard; far in front of the forces, generally, two or three of the most powerful of the *Fit-Auraries*; to the right and left, the camps of all the chiefs of sufficient note and number to pitch a separate tent, who choose the places most convenient, but never change their position with reference to the Ras's tent. That chief has a taste for always pitching his on an eminence, where it may be seen from a considerable distance.

Guards at night, or patrols (save the private guards of each great chief), there are none, as a night surprise is a thing almost unknown in Abyssinian warfare. In the daytime, though a surprise would be facile to a disciplined force, yet the system of bribery, the influence of family connections in each others' camps, the mutual espionage—so easy where all that turn coat are received as friends on principle—render it almost impossible that they should find the enemy unprepared for them. Nevertheless, the custom of sending all the beasts of the camp to feed—sometimes, when grass becomes scarce, to a distance of several hours' march—and still more the periods when the soldiers are sent for supplies to all parts of the country, even as much as two days' journey, affords an opening that in any other country would not be allowed to pass. This laxity, however, is only practised by the Ras from his overwhelming force, and even he, when on a campaign

in the country of the Wallo Gallas, where he was once defeated in a general engagement, is obliged to be exceedingly cautious, for these Gallas are both courageous and alert warriors, and, generally speaking, the bravest men in Ethiopia: of them, more hereafter.

All males who follow the camp are included under the term soldier, as distinguished from countrymen or merchants. The grass-cutters and wood-cutters, who form a very large portion of the army, necessarily do not take much part in the fighting, but they are as valorous in pursuit as the best; should they be fortunate enough to kill, they are usually elevated to the dignity of spearmen, and stories are recorded of prosperous grass-cutters who have arrived at unheard-of offices and emoluments. The wood-cutter has rights in the meat department, viz. his share in all slaughtered beasts, these being under his charge. So minute are the particulars of all these minor posts, and of the proper distribution also of the meat, of which little indeed remains to the master, that they would fill a volume. In slaying an ox, for example, each portion of meat, which, in their fashion of separation, must be a hundred or so, has its particular claimant, such as the wood-cutter, the grass-cutter, the shield-bearer, the singer or minstrel, the butcher, the maidservants, the *gambo* carriers, the tejj-maker, and numerous others, all which are scrupulously exacted; the *negarete-match*, or head drummer, also has large rights.

While the menial offices are mostly performed by women, the servants or domestics who more particularly surround the person of the chief are all soldiers. In order to build the house, or *gojo*, in a campaign, all, according to the necessities of the case, may be called upon to cut the grass and boughs requisite; this is considered no degradation to the warlike character, nor indeed, upon a pinch, will they refuse to cut grass for a

horse or mule, but only in the absence of a regular grass-cutter. These servants are generally chosen from the mass, for any trifling reason, as for their agreeable countenance, their pleasant manners, and sometimes for their bravery; they obtain some appointment about the chief, and then their advancement depends on the degree of favour they may creep into. One is made the server of the mead, or *tejj-asalafic*, who hands round the liquor to the company, receiving back the bottle or horn when empty, and regulating its return by that of his master's. This requires a quick intelligent man; he must watch the least glance of his chief's eye, to see if there is anyone he should especially serve, and he must have the tact to serve them in a way not to offend the pride of rank of any, which, when there are many strangers, is sufficiently difficult; he is worried on all sides by applicants who conceive they have a claim on his attention, and by officers of all kinds; he encounters taunts or insults, and must necessarily be possessed of the most unswerving good temper, and be quick of eye and hand. A good *asalafic* will sometimes take up the bottles by the neck with both hands, and serve them out at once, a dexterity valuable in the house of a grandee; he makes many friends and many enemies, as tejj is the end and soul of the existence of the Abyssinian soldier, great and small. Another is the *asalafic* of bread, who lays the table and serves the food to each guest; others are generally boys admitted to the apartments of the mistress of the establishment, and who perform all the little duties of the interior; they are generally a pretty mischievous set of urchins, who have the ear of the great man in his idle moments. Others, whose talent lies in horseflesh, have the charge of superintending the horses and mules. Below these again is the groom, who saddles his master's steed, watches and feeds him, and leads him before his master

when on the road. He looks more especially after the grass-cutters. The mule is saddled by the shield-bearer, who mounts it when the chief mounts his horse, and, save into the direct *mêlée*, follows him as closely as possible.

The Abyssinian soldier or servant must not be viewed in the same light as with us: it must ever be remembered, that between the chief and the most ragged of his followers there is no distinction, save that of wealth or good fortune, and the very fortuitous and uncertain boast of birth, as, in their country, he must indeed be a wise child who knows his own father. There are none of those real and essential differences of education, of language, or of breeding, and consequently of thought and feeling, that elsewhere prevent the servant and his master, the soldier and his officer, from meeting on a footing of intimacy, however much respect and affection may be mutually felt and entertained. The Abyssinian in all these respects is the equal of his chief, frequently far more elegant in his humility than the latter in his arrogance. If, on the morrow, by some freak of fortune not unfrequent, they should reverse positions—partly from their natural versatility, partly from this absence of any solid separating traits—there is scarcely one of those who stand humbly to serve to-day, that would not to-morrow grace the seat of honour and issue his commands as well as his nobly-born master, who in his turn would find no awkwardness in handing the mead-horn, or saddling the horse, of his quondam domestic. Their education, if it may be so called, fits them for this. There is not one of all the great men of Abyssinia, save the Ras, who does not either recognise a master willingly, or who has not been forced to do so in chains. The Dejajmatch, when entering the presence of the latter, is kept waiting at the door, and, when admitted, must as scrupulously arrange his cloth, and remain standing till told to be seated, and rise to

accept the leavings of the royal bottle, with as much care and the same tokens of respect, as are shown to him by his own inferiors. It is a saying in Abyssinia, that a chief or master is a child—signifying that it is his servants' duty to soothe him, to pet him, to advise him, to answer him, and to understand all his actions. The pleasant and agreeable way in which this system of intimacy is carried on, the inferior never stepping beyond bounds, or forgetting his humble manner, even in a state of inebriety or the excitement of battle, shows the quickness and versatility of the national character.

The Abyssinians, generally, may be said to go barefoot, but the military more particularly so, and it is a great thing for the soldier to have hard feet. Among the nicknames which they bestow on each other, one frequently hears that term of 'fire-foot' applied to a good walker.

The soldier also when used as a messenger—all correspondence being necessarily carried on in that manner—is obliged to pass on foot; and many are kept in the immediate pay of the chiefs, for their experienced qualities as walkers, and their knowledge of the fords, and sometimes, in an emergency, they bear a letter or message in an incredibly short space of time. In general, indeed, the Abyssinians are indomitable walkers, light, well-breathed, and capable of many days' continuous journey; as are also the women of the soldiery, who are not only accustomed to walk as the men, but to carry large burdens, such as gourds of mead containing sometimes four or five gallons.

CHAPTER IV.

MILITARY CLASS—*continued.*

THE GEDDAI, OR KILLING—THE GUNNER—THE HORSEMAN—MILITARY STRENGTH—ABYSSINIAN HEROES.

THE Abyssinian warrior is bred to consider killing (*geddai*) as the great object of existence, and the highest proof of courage. There are regular gradations of valour, and also of the *doomfata* proper for each. For instance, one man boasts, or perhaps wagers, that his deeds surpass those of all others present; another accepts the challenge, and they commence the contest, calling witnesses to each fact. In this contest, each elephant slain passes for forty men, each lion for four, and each buffalo for five; though in some parts it varies, as in Teegray, where the elephant is despised, whereas the lion counts ten, and so on. Men all count alike, but a Galla is sufficient for a ballad, as is also an elephant, and in some districts a buffalo, but never a lion. With the Wallo Gallas, also, the death of a horse is equivalent to that of a man.

If the wager is not confined to strict *geddai*, all prisoners are counted up, and then the number of lances picked up or received on the shield, there being particular war-cries proper for him who has received four at once on his buckler or person. This *zurruf* is a very important part of the *doomfata*. A man of renowned courage, who can count *zurruf* perhaps to the number of a couple of

thousand, can claim, in the house of any chief he may enter on a feast-day, the hump of the bullock, which is never denied him, unless some one challenges his right on the score of superiority. Though Begemder, Gojam, and Teegray have all become very lax in these particulars, they are strictly adhered to in the country of the Wallo Gallas and Bayt Amhara, in Aijjo and Lasta, and in Worroheimano.

The proper number of *geddai* which entitles a soldier to wear the *betoa*, or to plait his hair full, is ten. Some, in their *doomfata*, boast also of the manner of killing—as on a mule, on a mare, with his adversary's sword, with his bare hand, with a stone, &c.; the piece of a lion's mane, now affixed by any man of decent wealth, was formerly the sign of courage, and still more the lion's tail, now nearly obsolete. In Teegray the killing of a Galla and a lion gives the highest honours.

The greatest number of killed I ever heard counted by one man, independent of prisoners or other exploits, was 130; as to the prisoners, it is entirely a matter of fortune, as a man who has not even seen the battle, by coming up at the right moment, may capture hundreds at once; for when the victory has once fairly declared itself, all hasten to surrender themselves to the first comer that shouts the war-cry of the conquering party, and, with rare exceptions, all thought of resistance ceases with the flight of the chief, and the surrender of the negarete.

In the country of Bayt Amhara and the Wallo Gallas the style of fighting is as much more chivalrous, as it is more of everyday occurrence, than in Begemder and Teegray, &c.; and in Aijjo it is perhaps more deadly. The Wallo Gallas, however, are only courteous when fighting with each other; if they meet the Amharas on one side, or the forces of Shoa on the other, the slaughter is generally great, but little quarter being given. In fighting with each

other, they never burn the country or destroy property, which is easily explained, as frequently those who follow different chiefs during the day meet as neighbours in the evening, and talk over their morning's contest preparatory to another the next day; for the same reason, the slaughter is principally confined to the horses.

A superiority is generally felt and conceded to the horseman over the gunner, and the killing horse to horse is more boastfully announced. This idea generally prevails in those countries where the horse exists in numbers.

The gunners in an Abyssinian battle are first directed by each chief, under the immediate superintendence of their *Basha*, to take a certain position; but Abyssinian generalship is usually confined to the choice of ground, and time, and the arrangement of the troops, before the engagement commences, and seldom extends thereafter to any further order. The gunners are not drawn up in any line by their *Basha*, but, on the principle of 'you see your enemy,' take advantage of a stone, or bush, or inequality of ground, to annoy the enemy and protect themselves.

Chiefs and men of conspicuous courage, being usually of equally conspicuous dress, commonly fall victims to this dropping fire; but though the gun is much feared by the warrior, and that 'villanous saltpetre' abused as the cause of the untimely death of many a dashing horseman, yet from the want of skill which the Abyssinians almost invariably display in selecting a battle-ground favourable to the particular arm they may be strong in, it is found that the battle is generally carried by the superiority of horse or spearmen over that of guns. As, for example, the great carnage, renowned in Ethiopia, of Mai-slan-Mai, when the whole force of Teegray met the rest of Abyssinia under Ras Mariée, and both leaders fell. On that occasion Sabagardis, the chief of Teegray, possessed

an immense number of guns, which, if properly placed, might have driven back his opponent in half an hour; but neglecting this, he gave him the further advantage of a splendid plain for his overwhelming cavalry, consisting principally of Gallas from Wallo, Aijjo, and Worroheimano.

Dutch courage is no disgrace to the Abyssinian, the chief generally warming himself with a cheerful glass or two previous to mounting his horse, and in some instances being entirely inebriated.

When an Abyssinian offers himself as a gunner, he is handed over to some *Basha*, who provides him with a gun, and he proceeds to prove his qualifications by his prowess. No soldier is refused in Abyssinia, on the principle that all help; but if a man is found to be no shot at all, he is sometimes dismissed to a spear and shield, which it is evident all can use. The spear and shield become the property of the soldier, as does the horse if one be given to him; but the gun never belongs to any but the chief who has bought it, and all taken in war are brought to him. On this point, however, the guns taken by the followers of a Dejajmatch belong to him, and not to the Ras; for though by strict law it should be so, it is left to him by courtesy, it being taken for granted that they will be used for the Ras's service.

If a gunner runs away, there is a tacit and undoubted agreement amongst the chiefs of Abyssinia not to receive him with his master's gun, but either to deliver him up as a deserter, or to punish him severely themselves, this being for their mutual benefit; and the instances are rare of gunners selling their guns, unless forced by hunger, as their character is worth more to them than the price of the gun (five or six dollars); and as gunners are well received, and valued everywhere, there is the less temptation for them to commit any treachery. The gunner

who is a good shot, and with the reputation of courage, is seldom denied *tejj*, be it only a bottle; they are generally well supplied with corn, and the game they kill provides them with meat rarely seen by the spearmen, besides the slight value of the hides: the lynx, for instance, being rare, is worth a large sum to the poor soldier, perhaps a dollar, and the otter also in some parts the same. The good fortune of killing a buffalo he shares with the horsemen or footmen.

The gunner is distinct to whom the chief entrusts an elephant-gun; for, though he fights in battle sometimes, he is more usually absent on his hunting expeditions. The tusks are all for his master, who, however, generally pays him well, and gives him some land. If he has purchased an elephant-gun on his own account, the tusks belong of right to the chief whose land he kills on; but as without profit he certainly would not take the trouble to shoot them, there is a previous understanding as to the portion he is to retain. He also makes money, in many parts of the country, by aiding ambitious persons, who wish to kill an elephant, and who fire the first shot at the beast, drawing first blood (which in Abyssinia entitles him to claim the killing), when the elephant-hunter with his three or four ounce ball seconds him. For this he receives a present, according to the circumstances of the donor—be it a dollar, a horse or mule, or one of the tusks.

The elephant is found in all the deep valleys of Abyssinia, and the gunner alone dares to kill the large males; those killed on horseback or on foot, by lances, being invariably small calves, and this only during the latter end of the dry weather, when the long grass is all burnt, and the animals, for want of food, are less furious.

When the gunner or any other hunter kills a lion, the skin of the head is handed round to all friends, who are

generally expected to behave handsomely on the occasion, according to their means; or else the whole skin is made a present to the chief, who, in return, confers a portion of land, or other suitable gift, according to his humour and the station of the 'killer.'

The gunners of the Ras, all the *Bashas* at least, are well off, possessing the fine wine-countries in the neighbourhood of Efagh, but giving a certain portion of the wines to the Ras yearly.

The gunner always runs before the great man, who, in proceeding on a visit, may have as many guns as he likes carried, but no spearman, save his shield-bearer, and the shield-bearers of those of rank that accompany him. In Teegray, on the contrary, both gunners and spearmen may accompany in any number.

The Amharas are even yet little acquainted with guns; the most expert in the service of all the chiefs, even to Shoa and the Wallo Gallas, being of Teegray origin. Of these latter the most skilful are said to be the Agamees.

The greatest curiosity, as a gunner, in Abyssinia, is a certain dwarf, very short-legged, but an excellent horseman. He is one of the very few that fires on horseback, having first fixed a small iron rest for his gun on the strap, between the animal's ears, and trained him to stand steady: he is very courageous, and has killed many, having escaped himself, after many severe wounds, on several occasions, almost by miracle.

The Abyssinian seldom fires without a rest for his matchlock—either an *ankasai*, or bamboo with artificial iron branches, or else any stone, bough, or mound he finds at the moment, or with his elbow rested upon his knee he seats himself to the shot. The slowness of firing and loading give an advantage to the cavalry, who ride up when they see the smoke of a gun, and spear

the adventurous marksman unless he be covered by spearmen.

A great chief has generally his boy-gunners, or favourite youths, who have a separate *Basha* of their own body, and are supposed to be, more immediately, staunch adherents of their master, and not so liable to desert. The gunner affects mules rather than horses, and in Teegray he generally possesses one; and if he has also a scarlet shirt of cloth or velvet, he is a proud man, and the vanity of displaying it on the day of battle far outweighs the additional risk in the mind of an Abyssinian, and shows that, at least, they are not cowards.

The Abyssinian chief, in his affectation of grandeur, has always several favourite guns, dignified by most appalling names, and 'made drunk' with butter, which is supposed by most Abyssinians to possess some mysterious and inexplicable virtue even over iron: they rub it on their swords, on their shields, on their guns, on their heads, on anything and everything earthly; there never was such a people for fresh butter, and the strangest thing of all is that it is a disgrace to eat it in that form, though the Wallo Gallas have a passion for it. The grandee learns to fire, and may or may not be a good shot. I speak of the Amharas. In Teegray almost every gentleman is a good gunner, and uses the weapon in battle, for the education of a chief combines the knowledge of shooting, riding, swimming, chess, and the harp.

Flint guns are little valued out of Teegray, and many of their matchlocks present few inducements to the amateur, as they are often patched in places, where the iron of the barrel is worn out, in a fashion that I should little like to meddle with. The making of powder, and of the long coil of cotton from the bark of certain trees, is a part of the knowledge of every gunner. The gun is given to him, and he generally possesses a *zenar* or pouch-belt for

all his necessaries, which form the insignia of his calling. This *zenar* he must fill as he best can; he obtains an allowance of saltpetre and sulphur from his master, and, selecting the proper woods, he prepares the charcoal, and subsequently his powder, the grinding and the trying of which is a very important part of his performance. Stripping certain trees of bark, he proceeds to twist his *quod*, or coil, which supplies the place of a match; of this he has generally many yards about him, and as their powder, being something of a perverse disposition, will not kindle readily, it is essential that this match should burn steadily and strongly. For fear of accidents, they usually have three or four ends lighted at once, and suspended ready for use. Besides the main coil, he makes a little priming-horn of the end of a deer's horn; he has flint and steel, and a knife always at hand, and his own cloth (which is usually pretty ragged), or that of his boy, if he commands one, serves him for wadding.

Another important point is the practice at the mark. They regulate the sight by strapping and unstrapping the barrel with rings of leather, made either of the universal cow's tail, or of thin softened leather previously dipped in water. This is a process that is repeated necessarily very often—that is, whenever the gunner finds, on experiment, that the strapping must be altered. When a man is successful in his shooting, the gun becomes his bosom-friend, as he alike attributes his success to its perfection, and his failure to its defects; and he enthusiastically bestows the most endearing titles upon it—as 'my food,' 'my leveller,' and other untranslatable terms. The gunner, like the cavalier, has his vaunts and tales of hard-fought fields.

On the whole, though the gunner may have a less brilliant reputation than the cavalier, yet, as warriors of this kind may be found in plenty, while gunners are but

few, these have a more sterling value, and consequently a better prospect of their daily bread, with the further chance of a tejj country, a terrestrial paradise, which is the *ne plus ultra* of the less ambitious. The best shots, generally (at least those who most readily learn), are found to be slaves—Shankallas of the negro race, probably from their superior muscular power of arm. For the shooting generally I cannot say much—it is very ordinary indeed.

The horseman is the most important part of the force with all the chiefs, save those of Teegray; and, indeed, it is but very lately that guns have been introduced at all into the countries of Aijjo, Worroheimano, and the Wallo Gallas. These are commencing now to show a superiority in that branch of warfare—as they have always possessed it in those of horsemanship—over the Amharas. It must not be imagined that regular regiments of cavalry are formed, as with us. The chief, on receiving horses, either as presents or as tribute, distributes them among the followers he likes best. The cavalry charges are executed according to individual caprice, and quite irregularly, being seldom at all general, till the moment of victory appears to declare itself—a point of time exceedingly difficult for a stranger to detect, as the whole battle is a constant rushing to and fro, without any discoverable reason. The Abyssinian, generally, is passionately fond of *gayt*, or show, and the mounted warrior pre-eminently so.

The only good saddles are sewn in the Worroheimano country, the front and back being peaked fully nine inches in height, and with the seat made of four pieces of wood, tastefully bound together with white and black leather; the saddle-cloth of hide is slipped over this, two slits being cut for the back and front, and descends in two forks on each side, as far as the horse's knees. The

graceful or novel cut of this saddle-cloth occupies the attention of many chiefs, who are very proud of anything a little new or peculiar. The girth is of leather, and another saddle-cloth is placed over the first, made, according to the fancy of the owner, of red morocco or red cloth, or, as the tide of fashion turns, of the dyed goat's hide, prepared in Tembea or Basso. Every saddle is furnished with a crupper and a breast-piece, through a loop of which the girth passes; there is a head-piece for the halter, which is never taken off, as it may be required at any moment to fasten or lead the horse; the bit is a single curb, and has an iron ring that passes through the horse's mouth, below the under-lip, and serves for the chain. It is a great point with the Amharas to have the bridle as thick and stiff as possible, sometimes of nine or twelve plaited strips of hippopotamus-hide, and as strong as wood; there is a small thin cushion used by the luxurious under the saddle-cloth, but it is more warlike to despise it.

Then for *gayt* they have the *limoot*, nine, twelve, or more brass chains hung round the neck of the horse, fastened above with a flat brazen piece; and the 'bell,' hung usually in the centre of the amulets, which are numerous, of red and green morocco. These and the *limoot* are fastened by a small piece of leather to the head-piece between the ears; some few employ also the *finnaysa*, the mane of the wild ass—and sometimes doubtless of the tame one—standing erect round the neck of the horse. The *limoot* in some cases is made of silver. Then the *benaicka* is quite indispensable, even the poorest soldier borrowing, begging, or stealing one, two, or three, and the great man having as many as nine, though the orthodox number, as followed in Worroheimano, is six. This is usually made of circular pieces of polished brass, placed on the forehead downwards,

the largest being at the tip of the nose; each has a point in its centre, and the lustre is carefully preserved. It is lightly fastened down, so as to secure it in its place, but not to prevent its flying, on being tossed in the air; and a fiery horse, that throws its head up continually, flashing the *benaicka* in the eye of the spectator, is accordingly much valued. The stirrups are made small and light, as the foot is not thrust in, as with us, but one side of the iron grasped by the great toe and its neighbour. As a charm against the evil eye, a piece of the skin of the *goraysa*—a monkey with long white silky hair—is sometimes employed, which is pretty enough; this was formerly used as an ornament of shields, but is now discontinued.

The Amhara horseman, ensconced in the box that he is pleased to denominate a saddle, and attired in all the splendour of belt and sheepskin, galloping or rather caracoling his horse, despises the foot-soldier, and imagines himself the observed of all observers.

The pace is a great thing; in fact, a horse that is swift of foot for a few hundred yards, is generally preferred to one possessing the more sterling qualities of strength and endurance. The reasons for their choice of horses are not exactly the same as ours, and arise from their mode of fighting. A charge for any distance exceeding 200 yards is seldom made; they turn sharply and suddenly, by throwing the horse on his haunches, or wheel him off in a half-circle when at full speed, so that swiftness and obedience to the bit are the first essentials, and prized accordingly.

In flight they guard with their shields behind them, and a good horseman is praised by saying he guards his horse's hind-feet and forehead. This requires practice, but is easy of attainment by any tolerable rider, the great point necessary being fearlessness of the ground, as you have the choice of the lance behind and the hole before you,

and must take your chance of one or the other. These holes are in some parts of the country very numerous, formed by animals that burrow; and being frequently hidden by the grass, it requires nerve to ride at speed among them, even without the additional prospect of a fall being followed up by a few lances through the body. The lance is held in the right hand; the shield being usually on the left arm, in attack or turning it is thrown into the left hand, and changed quickly, as the thrown spears may threaten, from one side or the other. This is among the feats of a good horseman.

If the people of Teegray have the highest reputation as gunners, they have the lowest in horsemanship; those of Amhara and Gojam are only tolerable, but I think the Wallo Galla, in every acceptation of the word, a fine horseman. They are unwearied in the saddle, and have a firm seat; they ride down steep hills full of holes and stones, that would cause the dismounting of most European cavalry; they charge at speed over the *gwassa* ground, that I myself should hesitate to trot a horse over, and on which I am certain no horse of Europe or Arabia could be urged, even to a hand-gallop, without falling. The *gwassa* are tufts of grass on little mounds of earth, one or two feet high, with which the ground is studded; while the whole hillside is rendered slippery as ice, with innumerable rills that have worn the ground into a series of deep gutters, winding in every direction among the *gwassa*.

Besides the lance, which is usually of the commonest kind, the Wallo Galla generally takes with him into battle three or four pointed stakes, adapted for throwing; these are peculiarly dangerous to horses, though they seldom pierce a shield. They throw with much greater precision than the Amharas, owing to more constant practice. The latter consider it particularly wrong to throw a lance on

any occasion, except at a living object, 'wounding the earth' being the absurd reason assigned for this.

The Worroheimano and the Wallo Gallas are always in a state of more or less active warfare, as also the Wallo and Bayt Amhara, the Wallo and Borona Gallas, the Wallo and the Shoa frontier chiefs; these find their internal wars sufficient to keep them pretty constantly in the saddle, and, as a Galla of Legambo, whose face and body were covered with scars, said to me, 'What do you Amharas know of fighting? It is the same to us, and as regular, as breakfast and supper are to you. What was a horse made for but to fight on, and a man made for but to die like a man when his time comes?'

The Wallo horsemen very rarely campaign, and in their own warfare invariably return to sleep at their own homes, no matter how distant the spot. They are now more convinced of the impropriety of long expeditions, as when they followed Ras Mariée to Teegray on the occasion of Sabagardis' death, on their return, a disease broke out which carried off great numbers of them.

It is only lately that the *Chereuch* Agow, that is, those of Sokota, have been accustomed to mount large bodies of horse; but naturally courageous, and being perhaps the bravest as well as the most ferocious and hard-hearted race in Abyssinia, they are speedily learning to outshine the Amharas in this department. They have also adopted, from their neighbourhood to Teegray, the custom of carrying one or more pistols in their belt, which they use with some effect. They are under the immediate control of the Ras, and speak the language of both the Amharas and Teegray, in addition to a barbarous dialect of their own, the most harsh and dissonant I ever heard, and hopeless to a stranger. This is the cause of the distinctive appellation of *Chereuch*.

When an Abyssinian chief orders his horse, the report

spreads through the camp; horses are saddled, and the owners follow him as soon as they may be ready. The Ras is fond sometimes of sallying out suddenly (his horse having been saddled in the tent), and with two or three favourites making a rapid tour in search of game or other sport, and then returning, while the whole country is full of puzzled followers, searching for him in every direction. With all this apparent carelessness, however, he watches and observes every one of the chiefs, whether they are regular or otherwise in their attendance; and the result of this unseen scrutiny is frequently only known by the chaining of one, or the increased favour and appointment of another.

The Ras could not probably collect, from the territory he personally governs, above 20,000 horse, though it is difficult even to offer the conjecture, in the absence of all proof save general report; but should any successful chief bring the country under his domination, from the confines of Shoa and the Adaiels to the borders of Sennaar, and the neighbourhood of Massowah, independent of the barbarous Galla tribes, he might certainly be at the head of 80,000 horse, with 20,000 gunners, and 200,000 foot-spearmen—an imposing force for an uncivilised race; with these he would speedily bring under tribute the tribes of Gallas and Shankallas, and might even threaten the dominion of the Mussulman in Sennaar and Massowah.

The supernumeraries of an Abyssinian army much exceed the fighting force, as few, indeed, enter on a campaign without a wife, and all who have beasts of any kind have one or two lads to cut grass and look after them, besides the large establishment of each chief.

The number of people recorded for receiving a month's corn in Gojam, in one campaign of the Ras, was as follows:

—the chiefs with their followers, about 39,000; his own force, at least 15,000;—so that, I suppose, in our immediate camp, there were at least 55,000 human beings, and with these, certainly, 20,000 beasts of different kinds, independent of cows and bullocks plundered at intervals from the low countries, and which may be estimated at 5,000 or 6,000. Besides these, there were distributed throughout the province, under various chiefs, about 65,000 more troops; so that, on the Ras's side, 120,000 soldiers were probably feeding on the countrypeople of Gojam, and this for the last six years. The inhabitants of that country might well compare them to locusts. On the other hand, the chiefs that adhere to Bourroo plunder this same country, whenever they dare show themselves, with almost as little remorse, and perhaps more zeal, than those of the Ras; while Bourroo himself, before the appearance of the Ras, has collected and stored in his mountain all the corn, honey, and provisions of every description that he can lay his hands on. Under such a system of warfare, rich must be the soil that does not become a desert. As a general idea, I should compute the Ras's force of shields and guns, horse and foot, at about 70,000 fighting-men, if collected in one camp.

While on this subject, let me mention the other powers. Oobeay, who governs the country from the borders of the Habab and the Shihos to Gondar and Lasta, and on the other side to Sennaar and the Shankalla countries, could probably collect a force of 40,000; but the people of Teegray, who form a great portion of it, are far from being well affected towards him, and though he has probably 8,000 guns, he has very few horse; while of the Ras's force the horsemen would probably be nearly one-third of the whole. To the southward, again, Bourroo might probably raise 15,000 men without supernumeraries,

and when joined by his father, perhaps 20,000. His limits include the whole circle of the Blue Nile to the country of the Shankallas in the west, that circle dividing his territories on three sides from the Gallas, and on the north from Begemder. To this last circumstance he owes his strength; for, as there are but two or three points at which the Ras can cross his large army, there is no fear of his being surprised.

These are at present the three Christian chiefs that govern the country, and the fourth, Sala Salasee of Shoa, is an independent king, entirely separated from the others by the countries of the Wallo Gallas and the Borona Gallas.

In speaking of the military force of Abyssinia, let us imagine an invasion of the country, and the resistance it would probably encounter.

Let us first suppose the Ruler of Egypt, unrestrained and unchecked in his designs upon Ethiopia, making a simultaneous assault upon the country by the frontiers of Sennaar, and from the coast of the Red Sea. On entering the country, should the resistance on the frontiers be overcome by a large force, as it doubtless would be, it would be a question if anything like an organised resistance could, in their present state of misrule, be hoped for from the Abyssinians; and even were their whole force collected in one battlefield, they could not meet the quick steady platoon-fire of disciplined troops. On the other hand, these would find it equally difficult to follow, with any hope of success, the light and active Abyssinian, in the deep wildernesses and valleys of some parts of the country; for it must be remembered that the Abyssinians are well exercised in the use of arms, if not in the combination of their forces, and have guns that may be very harassing in strong passes, when used by men whom the Egyptian forces would in vain attempt to approach on foot in localities

impracticable for horse. As I have no intention of marking out a plan of campaign against Ethiopia, I shall content myself with the general remark, that the shelter afforded, even after defeat, to person and property by mountain strongholds, the difficult nature of the country generally, the absence of almost any point the loss of which would be sensibly felt, and the harassing and desultory nature of their attacks, backed by their superior local knowledge, would of themselves render the task of the Mussulman so difficult as at least to require the undivided attention and whole power of the Egyptian Viceroy to bring Ethiopia to ultimate submission.

On the other hand, an European Power would meet with but little opposition; the prestige of their name is already beginning to force itself on the Abyssinians, in spite of their professed contempt; and doubts of their own superiority have already found their way to the minds of the most enlightened. The skill of European engineers would soon open practicable military roads, suitable for light fieldpieces, which alone should be used at first; while a calm and conciliatory diplomacy, taking advantage of the numerous parties and differences that exist, would make at least as many friends as enemies; and, assisted by the similarity of religious creed, the end would probably be the quiet instalment of any chief supported by the Franks in the government of the country. This once effected, the mountains that still held out would soon yield to the persuasion of some howitzers, or bombs of larger calibre, directed by the skill of those who have already overcome the impossibilities of hill-forts, especially as, save the natural rock, art has done nothing to improve the defence of these mountains. The best thing that could be done with these, when in European possession, would be to destroy their defences and render them accessible, so that they might become no future *nuclei* of insurrection to the

natives. A slight European fortification would alone be necessary for us; and, indeed, the nature of the inhabitants renders a thought of rebellion on their part very improbable, when deprived of their strongholds. I know no country that, with judicious treatment, might be so easily governed, principally by a native force, disciplined like our sepoys in India, for which service, after the first irksomeness of military restraint was overcome, the youths of Teegray would be especially suited. In many experiments, made in modern times, of the employment of such forces, we see no brilliant example of success save in India—that monument, unequalled in history, of what may be effected by an enlarged and forbearing spirit of conquest, and by British judgment and discretion even more than by British valour. Setting aside theories of wars and governments, it would here be an experiment worthy of an enlightened nation.

I will conclude this chapter by relating some few of the exploits recorded of now living warriors, to show the style of courage admired and sung in the present day in Abyssinia, and which will not perhaps be uninteresting. I record at random from the thousand tales that form the theme of the soldier's conversation.

Welda Yesoos, the cousin of Oobeay, whose eyes were extinguished by order of the latter, is renowned for a valour so desperate and ferocious as to be dangerous even to his friends. His custom in battle was said to have been, on the commencement of the fight, to leave his forces, and without companions to disappear, when in the middle of the fight he would suddenly be seen in the enemy's ranks, with two or three trophies at his horse's rein, driving all before him. After the extinction of his eyes by Oobeay, which was done in consequence of the discovery that he was about to assassinate him and possess himself of his seat, he was still an object of dread. He suffered the cruel

operation without a groan. It is performed in Abyssinia by a red-hot thick needle, that is thrust through the eye obliquely, and then worked in every direction till the eye is entirely burnt out of the socket, and the lids meet in the cavity. After this he entered a city of refuge, always threatening Oobeay. Passionately fond of horses, he would station his servants in the woods bordering round a large plain, and there, blind as he was, take his shield and spear, and shouting his war-cry, urge his horse to speed, reckless of holes or impediments, till checked by the voice of a domestic telling him to turn. His deeds in battle made him the delight of the soldiers.

Yeddee, a native of Teegray, and the servant of Kasai, was renowned in battle for courage, and equally so for love of ornament; his shield was covered with silver and gold, his silver *betoa* was unequalled, as was the *kalicha* or coronet. The lion's skin laden with the same metal, chains round his neck, his war-shirt of the most glittering silk, and his horse's *benaicka* gleaming like clear water,—as the Abyssinians say of him, when he charged, it was not a man, but a sun bearing down upon the enemy. After the imprisonment of his master by Oobeay, he became *schifta*, or rebel, and the terror of the camp, who at last complained formally to Oobeay that they were unable to cut grass or draw water on account of Yeddee. With five or six youths, desperate as himself, he would lie in wait near the camp at night, and when the camp-followers came out to follow their daily occupation, sallying out on them, he would slaughter without mercy, sparing neither boy nor female; sometimes, waiting till some chiefs would commence a game at *gooks*, he would gallop into the midst of them, and killing two or three, fly and secure himself in his mountain stronghold, in defiance of pursuit; at others, visiting the camp alone, in disguise as a monk, after begging his nightly meal and lodging in

the outer doorway of some chief, at midnight he would rise, and killing the sleeping soldiers and his host, escape on the horse of the latter, shouting his war-cry to the terror of the startled camp. For some years did he thus venturously hold out, when at last, being surprised and taken, all expected that one at whose hand scarcely a man in the camp but had mourned some relative or friend, would be put to a cruel death. Oobeay, in an unwonted fit of generous admiration at his daring, and with a true knowledge of human nature, that the man so faithful to one master would be so also to him, offered him liberty and a greater territory than he had formerly possessed. Yeddèe refused all temptations, and requested that, if he was not to be killed, he might be sent to share his master's captivity, to which Oobeay assented, and he joined Kasai in the mountain of Tissin in Semen. From thence, thrice, by the unwearying spirit of Yeddee, did they escape in company, and were thrice retaken when near safety. A fellow-prisoner at last, in a slight quarrel, being taunted by Yeddee as the son of one whom he had killed, obtained possession of a loaded gun from one of the guards, and shot him through the body. So ended the daring warrior, a more striking instance of fidelity than of valour, and Teegray was left to chant the death-song of her hero!

I will relate one act of Dejaj Zwodie, the father of Dejaj Goscho, among many recorded of his prowess. He fought against the then chief of the Agows, and was defeated; but instead of retreating far, he threw himself into some jungle with three followers, while the pursuers passed on. The Agow general was seated on a couch in front of his tent, receiving his victorious soldiers, who were presenting their prisoners, and making their *doomfata*, as usual, when Zwodie galloped up, as though for the same purpose, and before he was recognised pierced him to the

heart; shouting his war-cry. The prisoners seized their weapons throughout the camp, and the greater part of the Agows being taken by surprise, or absent in pursuit, the fortune of the day was changed; many were killed, and the straggling victors, on their return, found themselves, to their surprise, in the position of captives to those whom they supposed they had vanquished.

Dejaj Hilo Mariam, the father of Oobeay, after fighting for seven days against the overwhelming force of Ras Mariée, on being defeated on the eighth day, and hotly pursued, his lances thrown, and his shield broken, was on the point of being captured, when he slipped off the bit from his horse's mouth, and with it dashed out the brains of the nearest of the enemy, and, leaving the rest thunder-struck, escaped to his mountain stronghold.

The numberless tales of the soldiers' idol, Dejaj Farris, who had no good fortune, though of a most chivalrous courage, and whose harp-playing was the theme of admiration, as much as his deeds and his wonderful escapes; and of Komfoo, in his wars against the troops of Mahomed Ali in Sennaar, and previously against the last native king of that country, would perhaps become tedious were I to relate them. The various and singular fortunes of Ras Welda Selasee; his single combats, his banishment to all parts of the country by the enmity of Ras Michael; his name or nickname of 'Trousers-give-me,' from having forgotten to call for that necessary article of dress, till after having despatched several of his foes; his famous horse Dhaynsa, bought for two pieces of salt as a dying hack; with many a pleasing anecdote, might perhaps be less interesting to those unacquainted with the country and the people, than they were to me; for I confess that I listened with delight to such tales, which, if unadorned by the periods of a finished orator, were at least accompanied

with an animation of manner, and a fervour of language, which evinced their sympathy with the subject. I have said enough to show the style of manhood that excites the admiration of the Abyssinian at the present day, and leave the reader to compare it with the renown aspired to in the feudal periods of European history—not, methinks, so widely different.

CHAPTER V.

RELIGION IN ABYSSINIA—TRADITION—THE PRIESTHOOD—CHURCHES—RELICS OF JUDAISM—CHURCH SERVICE AND BOOKS—FASTING—THE FITHA NEGUST — PUNISHMENTS — CRIMES — ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

In speaking of the religion of Abyssinia, I shall make but few remarks on the theological differences that may distinguish them from other sects. I shall limit myself to sketching the history of its faith, and then painting the priestcraft that now usurps the throne of religion, and the worse than infidel darkness of a fanatical and degraded Christianity.

The city of Axum is supposed, with all probability, to have been founded by some of the Ptolemies; but, if it be true that its granite monuments point to that period, I think it no less certain that a town existed there from the earlier periods, and previous to the most ancient records of Abyssinia.

These records and traditions state that when Solomon commenced his reign in Judæa, Axum was the seat of a serpent-king, of whose dimensions and habits many uninteresting fables are related; amongst the rest (as usual in similar stories that I need not recall to the educated reader), a virgin was daily provided for his expensive appetite.

Saba, a virgin of high birth and pure spirit, by her prayers and tears, obtained the favour of heaven, and some celestial warrior in earthly form slew the dragon,

and delivered the damsel; on her foot, however, the saliva of the serpent had fallen, and caused incurable ulcers and lameness.

Having been by universal acclaim appointed queen of the nation (Queen of Sheba?), she crossed the seas to seek for cure at the hands of the wise and far-famed Solomon, and after various adventures returned to Abyssinia pregnant with a son by that monarch.

It is said that on her departure Solomon gave her a golden staff, as the proof his son was to bring to him if the child should be a male, and a diamond ring to be presented if a daughter. In due time she bore a son, who was named Menelek. At the age of sixteen, having previously informed his father of her intention by letter, she sent him to Jerusalem with the golden staff. Aware of the searching mind of Solomon, and being herself quick-witted, she apprehended that the pledge might be mistrusted, and in her final instructions she bid her son beware of too hastily bestowing it on the person he might find seated on his father's throne, but first to examine his own countenance in a mirror, and search amid the throng of courtiers for a maturer resemblance of himself. Following this advice, he presented the staff to his father, whom he detected seated on the ground in humble attire, while another in gorgeous robes filled his usual seat. Thereupon Solomon acknowledged him as his son in wisdom as in blood; and, after keeping him some years, sent him to govern Ethiopia, accompanied by the eldest sons of many Jews of rank and consideration.

From Menelek are said to descend the Kings of Gondar to this day, and from the Jews the twelve judges, the keepers of the sacred books, and other officers that hold high rank in the empire.

Two things are certain—that at a far later period, six

sovereigns of pure Jewish race and faith reigned at Gondar, and that to this day numerous Jews are found throughout Abyssinia. I think it also highly probable, that (at whatever epoch it may be placed) the whole of Abyssinia was of the Jewish persuasion previous to its conversion; as even those who have adopted the Christian creed still retain, as will be seen, numerous Jewish forms and observances.

Their conversion to Christianity occurred about three centuries after Christ: it appears to have been the work of an Egyptian monk, and to have been facile and rapid. Since that period, about 118 Coptic priests have been sent from Egypt to rule as High Priests in Abyssinia, under the title of Aboona.

I shall not enter into a long detail of the efforts of the Church of Rome (continued to this day) to supplant the Alexandrian Church, in the patronage of this extensive archbishopric. Once, its prospect of success was considerable. When the invasion of the Mahomedan Adaiels, under their able leader Mahomed Gryne, had driven the Emperor of Ethiopia from Shoa to Gondar, and, following on his traces, had obliterated three-fourths of the Christian religion, the despairing king saved the remnant of his race and faith by the aid of the Catholic Portuguese.

The monks of that nation, after many fierce theological contests, induced the Emperor Socinios to acknowledge the Pope of Rome as the head of the Abyssinian Church, but not without the martyrdom of a Coptic Aboona, and others. The strong opposition of the nation ended, however, at last, after some bloody struggles, in the deposition of this apostate emperor, the massacre of many Catholics, the reinstatement of the followers of St. Mark, and finally in the expulsion of the Portuguese.

The reader—who would weary himself by wading

through the records of eighteen centuries, filled with the feuds and massacres, the monstrous and degrading lies, and the funeral pyres, for the establishment of the faith of truth and goodwill on earth—will thank me for not dwelling on sectarian struggles, wherein men, by long and steadfast gazing on the livid flames of superstition, have disabled their eyes from beholding the pure and benignant light of truth.

The Romish Church has still here many emissaries, that strive to prepare the way, stealthily and cautiously, for another spring; but, as it will be long ere she risks the failure, their progress is not at present worth enquiring into; and I shall now proceed with some account of the existing priesthood and religious system, for faith it cannot be called.

The more or less acknowledged head of all the Christians of Abyssinia, including Shoa, is the *Aboona*, a Coptic priest sent by the Alexandrian Patriarch, in consideration of some thousand dollars, paid on each occasion by the Abyssinians. His principal residence is at Gondar, in which neighbourhood he has much fertile landed property, and also near Adowah; he likewise possesses the finest and most productive territories in Teegray.

His person is sacred in the highest degree, and, being wisely much hidden from the vulgar gaze, he is supposed by many to eat nothing but *coso*, a nauseous physic, or, at the most, parched peas or grain; he is also supposed to be pure from all defilement from his youth up, and is always veiled even on reception-days, when he blesses the prostrate multitude, who return home in the full persuasion that all previous sins are then entirely remitted. He obtains much money from the people, who come sometimes from the most distant parts of Ethiopia, for remission of sins and absolution, or to be made deacons, for which they pay a small sum. They are

often kept waiting in the court a month or six weeks, particularly during the fasts, when the Aboona sees no one.

The next ecclesiastical personage in rank is an Abyssinian priest, entitled *Tchegee*, appointed and chosen by the Ras. His residence is also at Gondar, and he occupies the chair of a holy man named Tekla Haimanot, buried at Devra Libanos, a monastery on the borders of Shoa, whose name is held in a reverence equal to that of the Apostles. The sanctity of this priest is little short of that of the Aboona, and, in fact, each has in general his party—the Aboona having only the advantage of coming direct from Jerusalem. He also is supposed to be exempt from all carnal frailties. Within the walls of his residence there is a holy well, supposed to cure all diseases, not excepting blindness and leprosy, always on payment to the saint Tekla Haimanot according to the means of the afflicted. And so sacred is the resort, that not only swords or knives, but hair-pins, are excluded from its peaceful precincts.

After the Tchegee rank the *Alikas*, or heads of the different *geddams*, signifying cities of refuge, who are all wealthy men, holding perhaps the most enviable position in Abyssinia. It is not necessary that he should be a priest, but he must be able to read and write, and be conversant with the laws of the country. They are appointed by the Ras, and are the judges of these cities of refuge. The emoluments they enjoy as judges are enumerated in the chapter on the Laws of Abyssinia, and are considerable, and besides these they have a lion's share of the appanages of the Church. The most noted *geddam* is perhaps Axum.

Next are priests, all equal in rank, and signifying those entitled to administer the sacraments. From the rank of deacons, when qualified by learning or by fees, they are made priests by the Aboona, or by the Tchegee. They

are allowed to marry once, if they please; but any irregularity would be followed—though oftener in theory than in practice—by dismissal from the priesthood.

After these come the deacons, who are ordained as assistants to the priests, and in due time attain to that dignity.

Lastly are the learners or aspirants (*Tamaree*), who, during the time they are studying, reading, and psalm-singing, wear the skins of sheep for clothing, and beg their daily bread, to the manifest profit of their parents, and the great mortifying of the flesh.

There exist some institutions of nuns, but of no weight or influence. Of the monks of Abyssinia, some reside in large and holy monasteries, or pass their time as confessors to chiefs; others in wandering through the country, or making pilgrimages to Jerusalem; others again, of the purest order, dwell in the wilderness feeding on roots, exposed to every peril, and perishing unburied and unnoted. The monks form a large and influential class of the community. The two monasteries of greatest sanctity, in which no female footstep is permitted, are Waldoobba and Lallibella, to which pilgrims from all parts resort. There is also Devra Libanos in Shoa, and a monastery on an island in the Lake Haik, besides many others.

If the Abyssinians are little imbued with the intellectual or moral portion of the Christian faith, their sense of its more material points is evidenced by the decorations of the numerous churches that strew the face of the country. Those in the cities of refuge, from the sanctity of their name, and the more wealthy community that uphold them, are almost exempt from the ravages of the fierce military; they are generally adorned with paintings, abound with gold and silver ornaments, with glittering brocades and velvets, and all the pomp necessary to sustain a sensual and falling Church. Those in

the country are almost always on commanding sites; and as all these buildings are planted round with lofty trees, the cedar or the olive, from the summit of a hill you may count hundreds within view. On approaching, some are in more or less good order, and a priest or deacon may be found lingering about them; but in many nothing will be found but fallen and moss-grown ruins, in the midst of dense jungle, the resort of the lion or the wild boar, and marked by desolation and silence. Even thus, however, they have in them a terror for the superstitious ruler or warrior, and no sacrilegious hand dare invade the gloomy shade with axe or fire. Even the Gallas, in the provinces south of the Nile, where the Christian religion has been entirely rooted out, have, strange to say, spared these clumps of vegetation, from some undefined fear of the vengeance of guardian spirits.

They retain two institutions of Judaism, and cling to them with obstinacy. The Saturday in Gojam is held of equal sanctity with the Sunday, so that water cannot be drawn, nor wood hewn, from Friday evening to Monday morning. Moreover, many animals are considered unclean—as the hare, the goose, in some districts the wild boar, and some other animals.

There are numberless saints' days in the year, on which no work is done, and in the towns they will not even suffer others to work, which is most irksome to the traveller.

All church service is conducted in the Geez tongue, unknown save to the learned. The Psalms are also in that language, and the pupil, while encouraged to read, is persuaded that he should not seek to understand them, but that he fulfils a high duty by gabbling over a number of them daily. No one, save the priest himself, is ever instructed in the Gospel, in any tongue. They teach but one book to the children of the laity—the Psalms of

David—and, without forbidding other learning, discourage it, confining it as much as possible to the clergy and the scribes. Their great numbers, the almost superstitious reverence of the multitude, and the practice of confession, have enabled the priests to pursue this system with success.

Their learning is limited almost to the books of the Old and New Testaments, into which some are admitted that we consider apocryphal; besides these, there are some monkish legends, a code of laws, and the chronicles of their kings, containing in a mass of rubbish a few sentences worthy of notice.

The name of God is nowhere in such constant use as in the mouths of the Abyssinians. They imagine a special interference in every act of their lives, and in everything that occurs to themselves. A thief will piously praise God for having assisted him in a dangerous robbery; a man will say, 'God threw my enemy in my way, and I slew him;' the death of a dog, the breaking of a bottle, a slip in the mud, are sufficiently important to be attributed to the immediate will of the Divinity. Wonderful escapes, the bloodiest crimes, the most trivial commonplaces of life, are alike due to the interposition of Providence; only do they totally forget Him when, intent upon some scheme of rapine or self-interest, they heed not that there is a God for others as well as for themselves.

Fasting is rigidly insisted on, but it is sometimes compounded for money. These fasts embrace nearly two-thirds of the year.

The strong prejudices of the Abyssinians on the subject of fasting, and the power it gives to the priesthood, are something extraordinary. In 1852 my head-follower died of a loathsome disease at Massowah, where there was no Christian burial-ground. This man would never fast, hated the priests, and openly avowed his contempt and

indifference for their system. On my return, shortly afterwards, to Adowah, the priests took occasion to regain their influence over my servants, by showing them that the death of this man was a special judgment for his crimes, and the general iniquity of my household. Under these fears my whole establishment became completely demoralised, and were very nearly quitting me *en masse*, in which case I should have been, as it were, under an interdict; and if, at this moment, the Aboona Salama, or Coptic high priest, had chosen to adopt the same line of conduct, my mission would have been for a time at an end. He, however, as on all occasions, supported me by every means in his power, and this single fact may show the value and necessity of his friendship.

To put an end to this state of things, I had recourse to a measure which probably would not be considered very Consular in other parts of the world, but which was, at least, very successful. I called the whole priesthood of Adowah, servants and deacons, to a feast; I slaughtered for them two fat cows, and provided mead in profusion. After eating as only priests can eat, and drinking as only priests can drink, I am sorry to say that the exit of the reverend fathers was at last accomplished, with two exceptions, as intoxicated as their best friend could wish: knocking their heads against the walls on each side of the narrow road, and followed by a crowd of delighted boys, did they find their way through the mud on that memorable occasion.

The reader may perhaps imagine that some feeling of shame might have arisen among the priests or spectators—little does he know of Abyssinia. It was declared, *nem. con.*, that the whole thing had been excellently done; that it was delightful to see men with their appetite so fully satisfied. I was pronounced the most wise, the most generous, the most religious of mortals;

my servants were convinced that my house was not the daily haunt of Sathanas; and the Church remained my steadfast friend.

The blessings and cursings that went on during the progress of the feast were most orthodox, with frequent apologies for having thought ill of me, and a continual shifting of enormous white turbans.

I gave seventeen dollars to the rascals to perform the *fettah*, for forty days, for the soul of my defunct follower—something equivalent, I imagine, to the doctrine of purgatory—for which my conscience sorely smote me; but I really did it to please his surviving relatives, and I also wished to show my servants that I was not ungrateful for past services.

It is necessary for a stranger in Abyssinia to propitiate the Church, or at least to be very careful how he speaks of it in his conversations. Should an outcry be raised, on such points as a want of respect for the priests, not fasting, eating with Mahomedans, or the like, he will find it difficult to resist the storm, though the Abyssinian persecutor is generally content with banishment. It was by these means that the English Protestant mission was unceremoniously ejected from the country, when it was found that it was introducing the New Testament to notice in the Amharic language, and announcing truths dangerous to priestcraft.

The laws of Abyssinia are to be found in their *Fitha Negust*, a very bad translation or adaptation from the Code of Justinian. They never make a new law, as, with their usual superstition and obstinacy, they ascribe to this book a divine or sacred authority. This was formerly expounded by the twelve Judges (or *Licks*) of Gondar, and in learned hands might serve most of the penal wants of a not very artificial society. But now there are not, perhaps, a dozen persons in the county who are versed in it.

Thus, when a case is before them, 'Let us hear,' say the judges, 'what the Fitha Negust says,' as though it were a Delphic oracle; it is opened solemnly, and the first passage that they can find bearing at all on the subject, is read and acted upon, all other considerations being disregarded; and great is the edification of the crowd without, and the advancement of justice in the land. I need scarcely say that, in many instances, by this process, most extraordinary judgments are given, but everyone seems satisfied with them. As for men's lives, which are often summarily made away with on the most baseless grounds by the fantastic oracles of this code, they are always cheap enough in Abyssinia, and it seems to answer the purpose equally well, whether the right or the wrong man be put to death.

The code is, of course, most obsequious to the great chiefs, who, in fact, frequently make use of it to hide their own purposes and cruelty, and sometimes, when it is obstinate, refuse to hear it altogether. It has become, therefore, on the whole a mere farce, which some Abyssinians are not wrong in attributing as much to the vice and ignorance of the expounders (generally priests), as to the corruption or insufficiency of the text. It is supposed to have been compiled in its present shape at the Council of Nice; but it is hard to believe that some of its contents were dictated by reverend and Christian men so soon after the mild precepts of the Gospel had been spread.

The half, and more, of the volume is occupied with details or affairs of the Church, the duties of priests, then of judges, &c., and a small portion is devoted to punishments for civil offences.

There are several penalties attached to the removal of boundaries, and to marriage within the forbidden degrees. Torture is nowhere recognised, and is not practised in

Abyssinia. The punishments for crimes and offences are chains, flogging, mutilation of the person, and death.

Chaining is not much in use as a punishment now, but rather as a precaution against escape while a case is pending, or till the penalty adjudged be enforced. Having no prisons, the right hand of the prisoner is chained by the wrist to the left hand of some other person, by a chain of from two to four feet long. Important prisoners of state are chained in the same way, and sent to some mountain-fort for better safety. Thus an innocent person must always suffer with the guilty; but the Abyssinians, at least the Amharas, are in general blest with a good temper, and the prisoner and his guard live chained together on excellent terms, paying visits, and eating and drinking together, without any feeling of shame—indeed, I do not think they know what shame means—and in general live so jollily, that, unless you hear the chain rattle, you would never suspect a prisoner was near you, and then you must look at the hand to know which is the culprit. No matter for what crime he may be bound, all passers-by say, 'God loosen you!' 'What has that man done?' 'Oh! set fire to a house, or stolen a horse, or murdered a man.' 'Ah! poor fellow! may God release you!' They are a curious mixture of character. They will kill a man for his trousers, or for a loaf of bread, and feel no more remorse than if they had killed a fly; and they will shed tears if they see any person about to be put to death, or suffer other punishment by law. Nay, more, they will give their property, perhaps all they have, to ransom him. They will rob, steal, ravish, commit arson or any other crime, and recount them as good jokes, and then give up their mules, their couch, and their time to some sick or unfortunate stranger. They will quarrel, dispute, go to law for years about some trifle, and bear the heaviest losses, misfortunes, nay, death itself, with equal equanimity.

To return to the subject of chains: you will see rebels of rank, after being taken, chained thus and enjoying themselves, drinking, laughing, and joking with their captor, whom perhaps they have injured in a manner that would be unpardonable anywhere in the world but here. This, I say, you may often see; but, to keep up their inconsistent character, they will sometimes take bloody revenges.

On each occasion of a lawsuit, both parties, accuser and accused, must find security, or be chained during the continuance of the suit; and afterwards the party that is worsted must again find security on all the points for which he may be condemned and amerced, or remain chained—his antagonist finding a person to be his fellow, as above described. Also he must pay a certain amount, according to the importance of the case, to the judges, who get no other pay, and the numerous presents they receive on all hands. Men accused of murder are chained to some soldier of the king's guard till sentence is executed.

Flogging is inflicted by an ox-whip, the handle short, and the lash of twisted leather, six or seven feet in length; each blow strips off a piece of flesh, and some die under the infliction. There is, however, no disgrace attached to this punishment, as elsewhere, seeing that the chiefs of high rank suffer it; boys, and even women, are liable to undergo it, and the sentence is sometimes, for men, 300 lashes. This punishment can only be ordered by men of the rank of Bal Kamees, that is, those who have received the shirt of silk from their superior. Every man in Abyssinia can punish in his own household, and for this purpose uses either the common whip, or sticks of any size or dimension he pleases: the whip only to boys, as it is considered disgraceful for a man, and he would rather die under a huge bludgeon or bamboo, than

receive a few blows with such a whip. When I speak of servants, it must be remembered that, nearly all servants being armed men, and the whole country in a state of misrule, this punishment is necessary to restrain them from acts of violence; for they are indifferent to imprisonment, and, owing to their poverty, fines cannot be enforced.

Mutilation is practised, in general, on one hand, or foot, or both, and it is considered more severe to cut off the members on the same side: some, to inspire more fear, cut off at the knee and elbow, instead of at the wrist and ankle, as is usual. A thief is mutilated on the third or fourth conviction; but this deters little, as in many provinces they take a pride in stealing. For the rest, this punishment, though ordered by the code for several offences, is now used almost abitrarily at the will of all the great chiefs (that is, Bal Negarete, or those who have the drums beaten before them), and is employed against captured rebels, or for any offence against their persons. Although in some cases the criminal is denied all assistance, and scarce any means are known of stopping the effusion of blood, yet few die under this infliction. Sometimes the eyes and tongue are taken out, generally in cases of captive rebels—sometimes the latter only, as in cases of slandering the king or the priests. The Abyssinians have a curious notion, that if a small piece of the end of a tongue be taken off, it incapacitates from speech; but if it is taken off near the root, the sufferer can still speak tolerably. The ears and nose are cut off for some other offences, such as spying, being taken in adultery, &c. All mutilations are performed by the Negarete-match, or head drummer of each chief, and his perquisite is the clothes, like our common hangman.

The punishment of death is inflicted only in cases of homicide, and the general interpretation of the code is,

without exception, blood for blood. The only case I know of when an exception is admitted, and this in Gojam alone, is for the killing of a thief at night in the act of robbery, for whose slaughter even his relatives seek no revenge; but if a man kills in a drunken fit, or in self-defence, or in a fit of passion provoked by the greatest injury, or even by the merest accident, the law gives the same judgment of death. In fact, killing is killing, and no distinction is made between murder and the many degrees of homicide. All even that the judge or king can do, is to recommend the relatives of the deceased to accept the legal sum of blood-money, 125 dollars, and as much more for the chief; but if these relatives refuse, as they often do, the king can seldom employ his authority to force them to it.

Moreover, not only is a homicide personally liable, but also his relatives—as brother, son, or father—though resident in a distant place.

Again, if a man has been heard to threaten another, and the latter is found killed soon afterwards, the threatener is liable to be slain without further proof.

The punishment is carried into effect by delivering the culprit, bound, to the relatives of the slaughtered man. He is then tied to the stump of a tree, naked to the waist, in the open air, close to the camp or town; and the relatives kill him as they please—sometimes with stones, and even clubs, but more commonly by hacking him with the lance or sword. The body is then given to his relatives for burial, and the blood-feud goes on.

This practice appears to me to have originated in the fear of the chiefs, who do not feel themselves sufficiently secure against the turns of fortune to inflict death themselves on the culprits, and thereby incur the risk of many blood-feuds, if deposed. Nor is a blood-feud, even with the meanest, to be despised in a country where it is

the custom to count relatives by hundreds and thousands, and when each man thinks himself bound to avenge the slaughter of a relative whom in life he may not have known even by name, or whom he might have allowed to die of hunger without relief. Throughout Abyssinia generally, but especially in Teegray, they have proverbs that say relatives are of no use till after death.

Some examples may explain the system of justice on this point. Mr. Wurkà, an Armenian in Adowàh, was in the habit of killing hyænas at night, who are attracted by the carcases of dead donkeys. One night, according to custom, he fired at what he thought a hyæna, in the marketplace, and killed a man by accident. He took refuge in the church, and, according to the enlightened system of Abyssinian jurisprudence, his eldest son was seized and chained. It will be imagined that, according to reason, such an accident would explain itself, as it was proved that he had never seen the man, and could have had no quarrel with him; but no—he was saved by a gross superstition of the country that I have elsewhere adverted to. All Oobeay's councillors declared that he should be put to death; but Oobeay himself said that no man could have had any business by the dead ass, at that time of night, but a *Bouddha*, who went there to eat the carrion, and therefore it was a very good thing his being shot. On hearing this, the relatives of the deceased 'made peace' with Wurka for forty dollars, and swore to seek no revenge.

A man of Teegray, shooting at a deer, killed by accident a person sitting behind a bush that he had not seen. He was obliged to fly the country, for, if taken, he would probably have been put to death.

A gunner of Teegray, at a feast, quarrelled with another, and used some threats. An enemy of the latter, who sat silent and heard this dispute, took his gun

and shot him at night, whilst watching his corn; the man who had threatened him was handed over to and slain by the relatives, his innocence being proved afterwards by the confession of the murderer, who, however, according to another luminous idea, could not be touched, the relatives having once received the satisfaction of 'blood for blood.'

A man quarrelled with his fellow-servant in Gondar, and deliberately killed him some time afterwards; he was chained, and a certain time was given to the relatives to claim their right; but as they were either too distant, or the deceased had none sufficiently near of kin to take any trouble about him, the murderer was set free without the slightest punishment. So that a man may kill a person who has no near relatives with impunity, though the law is that in such case execution be inflicted by the king's slaves. This course was once taken by Ras Ali, when the murderer of Wagshoom Wassa, having fled to him, was thus executed by his orders.

The Ras Ali sent his cousin, Dejaj Walli, with a large force, to judge a dispute between a soldier and his own brother, Dejaj Ingeda, who was accused of having, by force, detained the soldier's wife, and gave orders to seize the woman, if found. Dejaj Ingeda, who was in the Ras's camp, sent word to his servants in Oriental phrase, 'that if they were women they might allow his mistress to be taken.' His son accordingly headed his followers, and gave battle to Dejaj Walli, and in the encounter the latter was slain. According to all law, Dejaj Ingeda and his son were answerable; but he being the Ras's brother, to answer the ends of justice, three unfortunate soldiers were sacrificed, on the pretence that they were the actual homicides.

At the battle of Mai-slan-Mai, Hagoos, the son of Sabagardis, killed with his own hand Ras Mariće, the opposing

chief, and afterwards himself fell in the *mêlée*. His father was taken prisoner, and on the third day put to death in cold blood, as satisfaction for Ras Mariée. Now the Abyssinians profess that for blood shed in battle no satisfaction can be required; yet nevertheless, whenever they can, they revenge themselves, as in this instance.

Amongst the Gallas of Wallo and Worroheimano, &c., whenever they have a good gunner on their side, they are obliged to give him a chosen guard of horsemen, to protect him from those on his *own* side who may be the relatives of their antagonists on the other, and who would instantly, even during the battle, kill him, if they saw any relative fall by his hand. When the battle is over, the chief puts the gunner in his harem for further protection, where he is fed like a gamecock, and only brought out to fight.

There was a person in Ras Ali's camp, who was famous for taking lives wantonly; but, for some reason or whim, the Ras so liked him, that he invariably insisted that the relatives should accept the price of blood; this man, in a slight skirmish with some of Birro's troops, was killed. Some days after, two chiefs of Birro were taken, who were present at that encounter, but who had no actual hand in his death. The Ras in this case, by a shameful abuse of power, ordered them to be slaughtered, and with great difficulty, searching through the camp, some relatives were found to do it.

I happened to be there, and the scene was not without some curious traits of character. The one was an old man, and trembled; the other—young, handsome, fair, and of a noble carriage—showed neither fear, nor a sullen indifference, but a quiet contempt of death; not an eyelid even trembled, when lance and sword were brandished in his face by his executioners. The scene was an open meadow, where the sufferers were bound to a solitary

stump. This meadow is called the Field of Blood, from the numerous executions and bloody battles of which it has been the scene, and is situated in Gojam. The sun shone brilliantly on a clear evening; around were men, women, and children, weeping and crying—the whole camp pitying this man, and offering all their property as ransom; but the Ras having strictly ordered that money should not be accepted—it being, in fact, an act of his private vengeance—it was refused, and one from behind letting fall his sword on the neck of the young man, the victims were immediately despatched by numerous blows. The bodies were taken away, and all was finished, and in half an hour forgotten; the Abyssinian, though pitying, being too light-hearted, and too habituated to these scenes, to think long of them.

Another chief had killed a man in a fit of intoxication. On this occasion, the Ras himself and all the principal chiefs offered the price of blood, and begged the nearest relative to accept it; but he refused, and the accused was put to death, several blows being first given ineffectually by a sword that had no edge. His two brothers stood by—he was a man of family—looking sternly on, without a tear or a word, waiting for the body, and, by their aspect, biding the day of vengeance. Thus are these murders perpetuated by law.

It is a curious point, that if the victim of a homicidal attempt does not die, there is no punishment for the attempt, except the suspense of awaiting in chains the result of the wound. But supposing the attempt to be made, and no injury inflicted, there is no remedy, except to make the person give security not to repeat the attempt; and in demanding this, the attacked party would have to furnish security himself.

There are some other punishments, not recognised by the law, that are sometimes inflicted by the arbitrary will

of the chiefs, as flaying alive, splitting down with an axe, cutting up by bits (as a finger or a toe each day), burying to the neck alive in the earth, binding the victim naked on a black anthill, anointed with honey or butter (this I only heard of once)—also sewing him up in a fresh cow-hide and throwing him over a precipice. There was a certain *deftara* I knew, who considered himself the wisest of physicians, would repeat the Book of Job every morning standing on one leg, and passed much time in culling herbs and simples. He had a burning-glass, which he believed to possess infinite and mysterious virtues. Confident in this, he on one occasion offered to Birro Aligas, who was then besieged in a mountain-fort, to set fire to the camp of his enemy on the plain, at a distance of a mile or two, with a sixpenny lens. This being acceded to, with promise of large rewards, the attempt was solemnly made with much prayer, and the result being of course nothing, Birro Aligas, in a fit of disappointment, ordered the poor doctor to be executed in the manner I have last described, which was done instantly.

In general, there is no enquiry as to who is the first offender or provoker of the quarrel; they only look to the man who has received the blow or wound, and award accordingly; although, perhaps, this blow has only been inflicted by the other party after much forbearance, and even in self-defence.

The award in such cases is generally made by elders, and consists of money, cows, or other things, according to the extent of the injury; but it is considered shameful for the wounded party to receive this, so the matter is settled by sending him some food, honey, butter, &c. The case happened to me in Gojam, where a half-drunken person attacked my servants in the street, and in the fray some wounds and contusions were mutually given and received; but it so happened that one of the

opposite party had received some severe blows; so the elders awarded to me a compensation of cows, &c., for the provocation—in Gojam they are more sensitive than elsewhere on these points—and awarded also to the wounded man of the opposite party some butter, honey, &c. for his cure. It ended by my waiving my right, and curing the man, on their demanding my pardon humbly.

Here at Hallai, while I write, a man has just had his head broken by a near relative, and as he is at the point of death, his relative is chained. All the village is in uproar and mourning. If the man die, the relatives of the homicide have determined to offer themselves by lot; the relatives of the slain have resolved to refuse, and to demand only the person of the murderer; and as there is here no master and no authority, a desperate fight is contemplated.

In a former case, at Hallai also, a family of four persons were heard to threaten a man. The latter died three days after, apparently in the course of nature, and the wise elders decided, without further suspicion, proof, or investigation beyond the fact of the threat, that two of the family should suffer death, and the sentence was executed.

No crime is unpardonable, nor is a man despised for any. Theft is in many provinces regarded as an honourable employment; highway robbery, even if accompanied by homicide, is quite excusable; rape is common and venial, and adultery is an offence against the husband only.

In the absence of all police, there is one institution in Abyssinia which is indeed the only guarantee of property, and even of life. This is the universal practice of personal security. In every cause the first step is to call on both parties to find security. If a man is known to bear enmity to you, you can force him to give you a security that the judge approves, and he is then even interested in protecting you, as any accident is laid to his door. All money

is lent, all sales and purchases effected (except in the markets), in a similar way. The chiefs demand two securities for good conduct for any offender they pardon, and in all cases of delinquency, the securities are seized, and soon deliver up the principal. Take it all in all, in a country where the law is so ill understood and feebly enforced, and where writing as a means of transacting business is not known, I think this an efficient idea. No doubt, like all human institutions, it is liable to abuse; but in general, its working efficacy is well understood, and admitted both by natives and travellers.

Justice is administered by all the chiefs and subordinate governors. Appeals from these, who are ordinarily rapacious, are frequent, and it is not an uninteresting sight to witness the Ras's court filled with suitors of all classes; the multitude seated on the grass, no one excluded, and the highest noble, the meanest peasant, standing, pleading on equal terms, before his judges or himself, and with entire liberty of speech.

This impartiality, however, is only apparent, being marred by the manner of procuring testimony. This is done by a commission, in the shape of a travelling judge, who collects the evidence on the spot (perhaps 300 miles distant), and in the presence of the parties. Bribery both of witnesses and judges prevails, of course to the injury of the poor, who, however, have occasionally a safeguard in the practice of the losing party paying a sum to the judge. It is the interest of this functionary to decide against the party that can afford to pay, unless other reasons operate, as fear or bribery.

Another institution, or rather custom, is that of elders, who solder up quarrels inexpensively to the parties, and act as general peacemakers. It is a singular thing, that almost every respectable Abyssinian, though perhaps up to the ears in rows himself, is always anxious to be

settling the disputes of others, and their maxim is 'forget and forgive,' with mutual concessions; and it says much for the amiability of the nation that these efforts are seldom in vain.

If the peacemakers fail, they then give a decision, which has nearly the force of law, being seldom disregarded.

CHAPTER VI.

MEDICINE-MEN—DISEASES AND MEDICINES—THE BOUDDHA.

MEDICINE-MEN and medicines meriting a short notice, I shall dash *in medias res*, and venture a startling and astounding fact, that shall strike Morrison aghast with horror, and wring the very soul of Holloway. The doctor in Abyssinia takes no fee unless he cures! Shade of Esculapius, favourite of the immortals! is there in that heaven—where, doubtless, the smiling Hebe handeth the '*Comp. ess. tinct.*' as their own peculiar nectar—no friendly god to avenge the insult, and blast the inferior nation with his lightning? Let me not, however, disparage the gentlemen that practise the healing art in Europe, by calling these medicine-men or cunning men—and cunning they sometimes are—doctors. Their gains are proportioned to their knowledge, being very small, and few indeed follow the art as a profession; the most usual physician is any neighbour willing to offer his services, or who has a reputation for some cure of the disease in question. In such cases the assistance is always afforded gratis. It is only on the sickness of some powerful and wealthy person that an *onaki* is sought for, and, on the strength of certain reputed cures, is permitted to experimentalise on the sufferer, previously fixing the price of his labours, and, if required, receiving security for the same, with the very necessary stipulation that it is not to be claimed save on restoration to health.

The *onaki*, then, is generally a *deftara* or scribe, who,

being able to read the sacred writings, calls down the blessings of Providence on his efforts, and strengthens the efficacy of his plants, by perusing many chapters daily, fasting. These are, however, of the best class. Others, on being called in, as though aware they have no time to lose, make themselves at home, and demand the best of everything for their inner man. A white cock, as in ancient times, is a powerful remedy in many ailments, and now and then a fat sheep, impartially demolished by the patient and the *onaki*. Mead also is generally recommended as an excellent succedaneum.

The remedies for dysentery are various; but for this disease, however, there is no doubt that *wagenose* is an excellent application, if it be not too far advanced, when I think it does more harm than good. I cannot say the same of pounded burning-glass, which one professor informed me he always made use of, having found it of great efficacy in several cases, on the strength of which confession he was dismissed from his attendance on my companion.

In fevers, the best-known remedy is the *gerowa*, and perhaps not a bad one. The leaves, dried and pounded, are mixed up, in a large horn, with clear honey and melted butter, to be drunk every other day or so in cases of intermittent fever, after the violence of the attack has passed; the bark dried is also recommended to be smoked in a hubble-bubble. The *gerowa* is extremely bitter, and may act probably as a tonic. Butter alone, in as large quantities as you can swallow it, is considered infallible by most Abyssinians. It is also the sovereign specific for bile, and in the country generally, in all shapes, it is supposed to possess the greatest virtues. It is used generally in all cases where the practitioner or amateur may be at fault, and is certainly harmless enough.

Wounds are supposed to be healed quickly by a root

called the 'hyæna onion,' the heart of which is applied ground; they also sew them up if severe; but for flesh-wounds, as I experienced myself, some of the hot springs of Begemder are an excellent and speedy cure. The Gallas are famous for their treatment of cuts and fractures. In wound cases, also, the *onaki* strongly advises nourishing food, to any extent, as meat and *tejj*. In fact, in a general manner, in his practice, the abandonment of food is fatal; and a sick man in Abyssinia is pressed as much to gorge himself to his utmost capacity, as with us, he is warned of the deadly effects of indulging his appetite, the first anxious question being, 'Has he tasted food? Sometimes, though rarely, should the *onaki* recommend a few hours' abstinence after administering a dose, the servants, anxious for their beloved master, by dint of insisting that he must die under such an infliction, soon seat him and the medicine-man at a substantial meal.

The Mussulmans, from their constant slave-trade to Massowah, have become pretty generally acquainted with the use of mercury, in its form of quicksilver or corrosive sublimate, in venereal diseases; but they take doses that would astonish a European practitioner, appearing to think that the sooner salivation is produced, the quicker must be the cure. Amongst the Mussulmans, generally, the favourite specific for all ills is 'writings' from the Koran, which they bind on the affected parts, many having a great reputation, even among the Christian population, for their skill in this respect.

One medicine used by the Christians, particularly of Gondar, is called *wusk-be-maida*, 'gold on the plain.' The leaf is narrow, on pressing which a white juice exudes. On digging two feet or more, the widely-spread roots are found, attached to which are flat pieces of two or three square inches. A piece, the size of the end joint of the little finger, ground fine and mixed in whey, forms

the dose, the effect of which is a violent purging, which, if too profuse, is said to be instantly checked by the eating of the gizzard of a fowl, always cooked in readiness when the medicine is taken. The dose is repeated according to the strength and taste of the individual. Again, a more powerful purgative is said to be the roots of the female *missanna*, the *boto*, and the male *andood* (used by the Abyssinians for washing), ground together, and an ounce weight of the powder taken.

Inoculation for the smallpox* is known, though not generally practised, and a mass of absurdities of course are added to the simple process by the *onaki*. Ophthalmia, though not so severe as in some countries, is pretty frequent, particularly in Gojam, and the ordinary medicines are alum and antimony; also, in Teegray, the wax of the *tasma*, a species of wild honey, found only in crevices of rock, in the body of the stone, which the bee sometimes appears to have excavated; the smoke at least of this, when placed on a live coal, is said to be a good application.

Hydrophobia is not very common in Abyssinia, and is also more prevalent in Gojam than elsewhere. One remedy for this I have heard spoken of, is the leaf of a plant called *kurrutt*, for three days rubbed on the person, and after being burned, and divers ceremonies performed, for three days more taken internally; this, however, is a very doubtful medicine. I heard of a cure, apparently well attested, where a man, raving in this disease, was confined accidentally in a house half full of garlic, and that in the morning, when his friends expected to find him dead, he was alive and cured, though very weak—having, it appeared, devoured an almost incredible quantity of garlic during the night.

* The smallpox, though always existing, only breaks out at distant intervals with the strength of an epidemic, and then carries off thousands.

The hot springs in Abyssinia are numerous, and are of beneficial effect in several ailments. In Begemder, the best known are those of Goramba, in the neighbourhood of Mahadera Mariam, and Wirrus Aggee, some fifteen miles distant; there are others also near this locality, though of different temperature. That of Goramba I found to be 127½° Fahr. at the spout, so that your bath is about 124° or 125°; Wirrus Aggee is about 105°. Sat Allenga is said to be still hotter than Goramba. Again, near the Nile, some distance from Korata, are the hot springs of Wayra, and others on the farther side near Agitta; others, again, in the Valley of the Nile, below Dembitcha, opposite the territory of the Amoro Gallas, impossible to visit, on account of those fierce tribes, without a large force. The inhabitants of Teegray descend to Eylat, a day's journey from Massowah, where the water is nearly or quite boiling at its source. These are generally supposed to be efficacious in cases of rheumatism, wounds, agues, the venereal disease, and of altogether a salutary tendency, as after a fatiguing campaign, and for delicate females. In these mineral springs, the Abyssinian, with a remnant of his Jewish faith that strongly tinctures all his creed and his customs, bathes either seven days or fourteen; and the great point is to stay as long as possible in the water, up to the neck, inducing excessive perspiration.

Besides these mineral waters, there are many salt springs in parts of the country, called *ambo*, very beneficial, at certain seasons, to cattle, which are brought from all parts to drink at them. They are most numerous in the district of the Wallo Gallas.

The tapeworm is universal, or nearly so, in this part of Africa, and all endeavours to discover the cause of its prevalence have hitherto failed. The blossoms, run to seed, of the tree called *coso*, which is found in abundance

in all the colder regions, is the equally universal remedy. This, ground and mixed in water, is very nauseous, but has the effect of ridding the patient of the enemy, and must be repeated every two months, to ensure a similar result. This practice the Abyssinian continues, in most cases, through life; and, indeed, many imagine the whole process conduces to their general health; but the effect of the medicine, for the time, is exhausting on some constitutions. Another medicine is the *matcha-mitcha*, a plant that, cooked with butter, is agreeable to the palate, but is not strong enough to be certain in its effects. The only remedy that, in many cases, has the effect of finally destroying the worm, is the bark of a tree called *moosinna*, found only, I believe, in the wilderness of the River Marubb. It is ground with much difficulty to a fine powder, and eaten with honey or linseed, a couple of table-spoons of powder being a strong dose for one unaccustomed to it. Without the least unpleasant taste, or even the slightest emetic tendency, it is inconceivably difficult to swallow; weighing on the palate and the stomach, it causes you to feel the sensation of having eaten pounds of food after only a few mouthfuls, and is described by the Abyssinians as being 'heavy.' Its effects on the frame are somewhat violent, and are sensibly felt during several days, frequently attended by rheumatic pains, and, for twenty-four hours, with weakness and constant thirst. With the two first-named remedies, abstinence, till the desired effect is produced, is usually practised; with the last, free living, and ripe or well-fermented mead is recommended. I think that the *moosinna* would have a more substantial power in other climes than the *coso*, being also well adapted to keep any length of time, though it might not be suited to persons of weak constitution.

Worms (*wosfatt*) are common both in men and horses.

I have been told, by one who experienced its effects, that a plant or tree called *akto*, found in the low countries, is the best remedy for the human being; it bears a seed resembling white grain, which, being eaten, has an effect corresponding to the number taken. It produces severe hiccough.

Rheumatism is a puzzle to the Abyssinian as elsewhere. Some draw blood from the spot, making two or three cuts with a razor, and exhausting the air by suction applied at the small end of a horn, by means of the tongue, on the cupping principle; some trust to the hot springs; others to the well of some holy saint, as Tekla Haimanot, in Gondar. In Teegray they adopt a sufficiently curious plan. On the death of a wild boar, the rheumatic subject is besmeared with the blood and contents of the stomach, after which he clothes himself in the skin; while warm, and after remaining thus a few hours, tastes a morsel from every separate portion of the meat, as the head, leg, sides, &c. &c., after which, bathing, the treatment is complete. Some portions of the meat of the wild boar, in parts of the Amhara country, are considered to have the virtue of removing barrenness, and in Teegray, is in repute as a healing principle generally.

Asteneggaree, or *abissho*, is a plant found in the valley of the Takazzee; there is a common plant of the name with black berries, and the difference is that the berries of the former are white. Both are said to affect the brain with a temporary madness, on being partaken of; and the white, being the stronger, was in common use in Teegray, a few years back, in legal processes, when a person accused of any crime was adjudged to eat it as a proof of his innocence—it being supposed impossible that he should avoid criminating himself in the consequent drunkenness, if guilty.

No country in the world probably comprises, in so

small a territory, so rich a herbal as Abyssinia, owing to its various elevations.

Metall (signifying striking) is the general name for all kinds of colds, sore-throats, ordinary feverish attacks, liver complaints, giddiness, &c. It is imagined that this stroke is received in various ways: in drinking out of glass, for instance, the rays of the sun falling on the liquor produce a dangerous *metall*; in drinking at night, and then passing into the open air, the consequent cold or sore-throat is a *tejj metall.* The numerous ailments of the unhealthy shores of the Lake Tsana are almost universally attributed to the glancing reflection of the sun upon its waters; sometimes, in an unhealthy season, the name is even given to some deadly epidemic, as cholera; and it is indefinitely used for almost all the sicknesses whose causes they are unacquainted with. The remedies are certain plants, so inefficient as to require no notice, and amulets of writings, &c.

Consumption is not very frequent, and, being utterly ignorant of the causes, the Abyssinians naturally attribute it to a *Zar*, or some other devilment. Of dropsy I saw only one case, and heard of no other.

The people of Aijjo and Worroheimano, of the Galla race, are famous for their treatment of fractures, and some of the operations described to me by the Ras, and other chiefs of that region, are indeed singular. It is, of course, not necessary to believe all they tell you; but it is certain that they are skilful in the binding-up of a simple fracture, which they do in a circle of split bamboo. The accounts of some cases, indeed, show considerable ingenuity in the inventors, as I heard an instance from one, who stated that he had been an eyewitness of the circumstances. A soldier, falling from his horse, fractured severely his fore-arm; a Galla surgeon (or *waggayra*) from Aijjo, of repute in these matters, being called, he wound tightly, round

and round the upper part of the arm, from the elbow to the shoulder, a long narrow strap, and then proceeded to pound the whole forearm, from the elbow to the wrist, with a heavy smooth piece of iron, till it became, as my informant expressed it, like *fetfet*—or, if I may use the simile, of pudding—fracture and all; after which he enveloped the arm in the leaves of an adhesive plant called *kit*, and retained the whole in shape by split bamboos of the length of the forearm. When the operation was finished, during which the patient was insensible, the strapping was removed from the upper arm. During two weeks the strictest diet, sufficient only to sustain life, was ordered, after which a more generous diet was allowed. I have heard the same process also described by many others, though I, unfortunately, never had an opportunity of witnessing it.

Another case was described to me, in which the same *waggayra* successfully performed the Cæsarian operation. My informant, describing the case to me with horror and trembling, said that it was performed in the presence of many—such things are not so delicate in Abyssinia as with us—and that none had the nerve to render the least assistance to the operator, but all hid their eyes from a sight so startling.

It is universally stated that the Gallas are in the habit of opening the stomachs of those who are too fat, and removing the superfluous load. This all agree in; and in the country itself, the Gallas, to whom I had not mentioned the report, one day pointed out to me an old rich curmudgeon, who was said to have undergone the operation thrice: he was stout enough to speculate on a fourth, and spoke of it as a matter of course.

Trepanning is performed solely, I believe, in Agamee; and the head of Dejaj Sabagardis was a mass of pieces of gourd, their substitute for silver, from numerous wounds.

The Abyssinian belief in the existence of the Bouddha is universal, and is sufficiently curious to merit some notice. The Bouddha is said to be a human being, that has the power of invisibly devouring and killing anyone not defended by certain charms and amulets, or unless he is discovered. His attacks are made with malignant cunning, and he is cast out only by the skill of those possessing such charms or medicines. He has also the power of changing himself into a hyæna at will, and in that form finishes the bodies of those whom he has slaughtered in his more intellectual capacity, being distinguished from the veritable beast only by superior malice in his deeds.

The Bouddha may be of either sex, of any trade or calling whatsoever, even a holy priest; but the class of workers in iron are universally and without exception honoured with the title, insomuch that the terms are synonymous. No obloquy attaches to this, as the Abyssinian is not given to persecution, nobody troubling himself to do anything but protect his own particular person. The eyes of the Bouddha are sinister, and indeed it is supposed to be generally by a look that they enter the body of the selected victim. They travel far from their own country, that they may not be discovered, which of course, in their hyæna capacity, they can easily do by night; though on some occasions they daringly attack a neighbour under the disguise of various diseases, trusting that they may compass his death before discovery. The general belief is that their power resides in a certain plant, known only to the initiated. The Bouddha is said to twist this gradually and daily, the ill-health of the subject increasing in the same ratio; and when he finally tears it, the victim dies. They have a king, though he is not universally known, who resides on the mountain of Abbola in Maycha, and to whom his

votaries from every quarter daily bring offerings of corpses.

Like all topics of this kind, particularly in a nation where all communication of such facts is verbal, each one, in speaking of them, has a different version of affairs, and it is difficult categorically to define this human demon; but the above is in conformity with the most generally-received theories.

Let me describe two cases, among many that I myself witnessed, of Bouddha-devoured subjects,—one a male, the other a female.

One night, hearing tumultuous enquiries being made as to where a man cunning in Bouddha could be found, and learning that a servant of mine, a fine young man, was strong in the fit, I went to examine the proceedings. He had been ailing for some days, and in low spirits, and this evening his fellow-servants, suspecting that a Bouddha was making free with him, secretly applied some medicines of minor power to his nose; he rejecting them with violence, the Bouddha was immediately apparent. From that moment his own consciousness ceased, and the said demon began to utter, in his person, the falsehood that he was perfectly well, and begged piteously to be released, saying that he only required to be bled. This is a device of the enemy, as it appears the drawing of blood by the cupping-machine is peculiarly favourable to his operations, and enables him more firmly to keep possession of his victim. Then, being held down by two or three stout men, the grand struggle commenced between the medicine-men, or doctors, and the Bouddha —the latter striving to deceive them, and the former to force the truth from him. All addressed themselves to the sorcerer, and not to the prostrate sufferer, who was (or was supposed to be) unconscious now of everything. After a few struggles the lad lay quiet, breathing heavily,

his eyes shut, and his pulse (which I felt) perfectly regular, and to all appearance in excellent health. On observing that I had a gold ring on my finger, I was immediately requested to take it off, as unfavourable to the counteracting medicine. The potent remedy being dipped in water, and thrust into the nostrils or mouth, the patient struggled violently, and strove to thrust it away; but his head and hands being firmly held, his efforts were vain, and the Bouddha remained resolutely silent. Stronger remedies were then applied, and the sorcerer, being assailed on all hands with abuse, menaces, and orders to speak, at last shrieked that he would tell them everything. Tearing himself away from the medicine, and commencing a series of diabolical howls and frantic laughter, that startlingly resembled the tone of a hyæna—indeed, in some cases, occurring at a distance from me, I have thought them the veritable animal, until informed that it is only some one Bouddha-eaten—he then began to confess, stating that he was such a one from such a country, and that his relatives were so-and-so, interrupting the recital with shrieks and howls, and repeating constantly that he had confessed all; but the nauseous smell being constantly held to the nose, he by degrees sputtered it all out, and remained quiet. After some consideration, he was unanimously pronounced a most false and obstinate Bouddha, by what or for what reason I know not; and fresh doses of plants, roots, and powder being mixed, and stuffed into the mouth and nostrils—at the imminent risk, as I thought, of the patient's suffocation—he again commenced a different tale, true this time; stating that he was a priest of the name of Todo, of the Agow country, who had seen the lad at the Aboona's house, and having been treated rudely by him, had seized him in revenge, and had been secretly devouring him for some months. Being then asked what was his favourite mixture, after the approved

formula in such cases, he (the sorcerer) being of peculiar tastes, replied, '*Fiato in creis*' (white ashes and dog's excrement); a horn full of this delectable compound was then mixed, and hidden in some underwood about twelve yards distant, the patient now remaining perfectly silent, with his eyes closed as before.

On this being accomplished, the bystanders withdrew on one side, and those who held him left him perfectly free, bidding him, with many insults, to seek his supper. He sprang up, and commenced rapidly and wildly crawling on his hands and knees, as if in search of something, and seemed scarcely human; when, with howls of frightful violence, he plunged his naked body and limbs into masses of tangled thorn, without appearing to feel them. Thus traversing the court in every direction, apparently regardless of the spectators, he presently found the *woncha*, or horn, seized it, and, swallowing its contents ravenously, fell back as if exhausted. On being asked how he was, he feebly replied, in his natural voice, which could not during all this time have been recognised, 'Thank God;' and soon afterwards, as one awakening from a dream, saying that he felt sick, drank water, vomited, and then slept.

Everybody talked freely of what had passed in his hearing, but he did not seem to comprehend that they were speaking of him; and indeed ever after, he would speak of the 'Bouddha that, my comrades tell me, ate me at Mahadera Mariam,' declaring to me, by solemn oaths, that he had no knowledge of what had passed, nor even knew that he had been unconscious, until their jokes informed him of it. He was unwell for some days after, which was attributed to the long time the sorcerer had been secretly at work within him.

Now let the intelligent reader bear patiently with me while I recite the other case. Gojam is notorious for the

number of its Bouddhas, being apparently about one half of the inhabitants. In the town of Yawish, I engaged a young servant-girl, who, two days after, was attacked with rheumatism in her right arm, which swelled greatly, and quite disabled her from service. I kept her, however, for charity, and she remained in that state for about three weeks, becoming worse and worse; in fact, the rheumatism was a most extraordinary attack in one so young, who declared that she had never known it before; and the fingers, almost lost in the swollen state of the hand, attested that there was no deception in that. She was always begging to be cupped with great earnestness—the reader will remember that this was a fraud of the Bouddha—though after each bleeding she became worse.

One evening she was sitting groaning near the fire, when her cries became much more frantic than before, as she shrieked out that her whole body was seized with rheumatism, and, with that singular hysterical laugh that was always one of the first symptoms, repeatedly called for the cupping-horn. I told them, innocently, to bleed her if she wished it; but being warned of my folly, as it was now apparent that a Bouddha had taken possession of her, I left her assembled friends to do as they pleased. They carried her out into the yard—it was just dark—and medicines were applied as above. On this occasion the Bouddha was most frantic, crying out that he was bound under a curse by his father-confessor and priest, whose names he mentioned, to kill the girl, and that he would not leave her. The medicine, however, was too strong for him, and she was as usual let loose, with the difference, that her hands being tied behind her back, she travelled on her knees alone in search of the mixture, yet more nauseous than the previous one I have described. Howling like a hyæna, she seized the horn between her

teeth, and drank the contents without spilling them—a feat that she certainly could not have performed when in her senses; her hands were now loosened, she became almost instantly well, and came and sat down by the fire. On being asked how her rheumatism was, about half an hour afterwards, she replied that is was nearly well, and the swelling had disappeared almost entirely. In a day or two the pain had left her, and indeed its lasting so long was attributed to the virulent nature of the Bouddha, who, being sure of his victim, had eaten a morsel of the tendons of her wrist before his time.

The man who was named in this case as the sorcerer, lived at a village close by, and came to Yawish on market-days. Being well known to the girl and all her relations, my servants told me that on meeting him afterwards, and accusing him of the deed, he had passed on without reply; but I did not believe they had the courage to do it.

The above may be considered as examples of the aspect which the case generally takes. In some instances the patient dies in spite of remedies.

Fellashas, or Jews, are also universally said to be Bouddhas. They kill horses, but I know not why. I have never heard of the mule or the humble ass falling a prey to them; I suppose they are beneath their notice.

When a hyæna is killed, the lance, sword, or weapons which are stained with his blood, are taken to the nearest priest, to be blessed and sprinkled with holy water, in case he should have been a sorcerer; of course forgetting the absurd contradiction, that the said sanctifier may himself be a brother of the order.

Many have assured me that they have killed, or seen killed, hyænas with an earring in their ears, the inference being that they are females who have forgotten to take them out on assuming the brute form; but as I never saw

it in the numerous specimens we shot, I must take the liberty of doubting the fact.

The Bouddhas are said occasionally to indulge in a facetious habit of riding each other, as is evidenced by those found with sore backs; and I have heard in Gojam that they sometimes make free with horses out of the stables of strangers, whose servants, however, may possibly have taken a freak to visit their mistress on a moonlight night, and preferred riding their master's horse to wearying their own legs. Dejaj Hilo Mariam, of Semen, the father of Oobeay, is said to have a house full of Bouddhas, and, in consequence, there are scarcely any to be found in his country. Dejaj Goscho is said by many, who professed to me to have been eyewitnesses, to have secretly buried a potent spell on the threshold of his house, and to have held a grand festival for the purpose of discovering the sorcerers and destroying them. The story continues that the guests turned back in hundreds from the door with signs of fear, being unable to cross the charmed spot; but that among them were found so many of the highest of the land, and of Goscho's own family, that he was obliged to suffer the foul iniquity, like his predecessors, and leave to heaven the cleansing of the stain.

This, had I seen it, would indeed have astonished me; but as I did not, I can only vouch that Dejaj Goscho boasts of having the most powerful remedies in the country against the Bouddhas.

The tooth and skin of the hyæna are in themselves charms, though not very potent. Mystic writings from Holy Writ, disposed in circles and crosses, and prepared, for a consideration, by learned scribes, are also in request; roots and plants of many kinds—some heirlooms, and others picked up from favoured friends, or revealed occasionally in dreams—with shells, bits of amber or ambergris, leg-bones of hawks, and generally anything curious

and attractive to the eye, make up the rest of the circle of preservatives worn round the neck; these latter are more a precaution against the evil eye than the 'hyæna sorcerer,' between which, however, there is some vague and indescribable distinction.

Horrible as are the symptoms which I have described, it is astonishing with what indifference, nay ridicule, the whole affair is regarded by the Abyssinian; all will eat and drink, joking and laughing, with those reported to possess these powers. The nearest approach to the Abyssinian belief in Bouddha is the Loup-garou of France, and the Wehrwolf of Germany; but the analogy between the Bouddha and the possessed demoniacs mentioned in Holy Scripture will occur to every reader.

White men are considered to be protected from these attacks by the colour of their skin, being that of Our Saviour.

One of the most intelligent Abyssinians I have conversed with on the subject, said to me: 'Besides the numerous contradictions in which such a creed involves us, I find it impossible to believe that God has given such superior powers to some men, that they should be able to convert themselves from a human being, as He formed them, into a quadruped, or to render themselves invisible, as this would entirely pervert and endanger the order of creation, as we are taught by our religion and our senses to view it. But we see that certain herbs and remedies, applied inwardly or outwardly, cure certain diseases, or are supposed to do so; and I think it not incredible that some men should possess a secret knowledge of others, by which they may produce in their enemies the effects which are ascribed to the Bouddha; and He who permitted such knowledge may also have enabled them to discover the counteracting charms, as with other diseases that flesh is heir to, and their corresponding medicines.'

I give the sense of what the man said, though not the words, which he dared not have uttered to any but myself, on penalty of being considered a most unorthodox madman.

In fear of both the Bouddha and the evil eye, there is a great deal of hiding behind cloths, and other precautions: these have gradually become customs which it is a disgrace to neglect. In eating in the open air, cloths are held around by servants, to prevent eyes from resting on the operation, and the poorest hide themselves under their own cloth—this being a favourable moment for the evil spirit to enter you. The exposure of the naked body is also considered a risk, when many are present. In the case of a chief like Bourroo, each time he raises his bottle to his mouth to drink, or condescends to cough, officious favourites start forward to hide, with their cloths, the royal weakness. Originating in the same feeling, when a new horse is to be tried, it is prudent to retire apart for the purpose, as the 'eyes of people are bad'—in this case as much for the horse as yourself. A very good horse and good rider are supposed to be in the greater danger, as attracting all eyes. Indeed, in general, without strong amulets, any too conspicuous act or appearance becomes highly imprudent.

The bloodstone is considered a great cure for hæmorrhage, and rings containing a red cornelian are highly prized by the great men of Abyssinia, as if the efficacy consisted in the colour.

Soothsayers, fortune-tellers, and predicters of the future exist in plenty, but there is no trace of the gipsy. A knowledge of the language of birds is claimed by the Lasta Agows, and to this they attach great importance, regulating their marketings, journeys, and even sometimes their marches in war, by the twittering of some species. The language of hyænas is also supposed to be familiar to the natives of Hamazain.

Many illnesses, and sores about the feet, are attributed to a snake having struck you with his tail in passing.

In the Amhara or Teegray, it is very generally thought exceedingly unfortunate to break a bone after nightfall —that is, should the marrow of the sheep or goat tempt you to such iniquity—with other like credulities, which at least serve to pass away an hour, to the Abyssinian, in tales told with amusing and lively volubility.

CHAPTER VII.

MERCHANTS—PEASANTRY—SERVANTS—WOMEN—CHESS—THE HORSE.

THE mercantile community are not very numerous, and are looked on with much contempt by the military, but patronised by the chiefs, whom they conciliate by rare presents, in addition to the duties they pay. The Mahomedans of Abyssinian extraction (not Galla), rarely follow any other pursuit, and three-fourths of the trade are in their hands; of wealthy Christian merchants there are scarcely twenty in the whole country. The rich caravans travel in large numbers, and well-armed, and are as well used to hard fights as the soldiery, especially those who reach Enarea. They have no traits which distinguish them from any other class of the community; and the merchant must stuff his followers with meat and mead like the military chief, paying regular wages in addition.

The countries richest in commercial produce are the Galla provinces of Enarea, Djimma, and those adjacent. They abound in ivory, *zibbad*, excellent coffee, wax, and spices; gold is found in the sands, and these districts are accustomed to trade with the Abyssinian caravans. Their products find one outlet through Shoa and the Adaiel, eastward into the Indian Ocean, at the port of Zeyla; another through Abyssinia, by various channels, northward, and passing either through Gondar and Sennaar to Egypt, or through Adowah and Massowah into the Red Sea. A third route is frequented by the traders who,

following the course of the White Nile, also reach Khartoom, and there meet the caravan from Gondar.

The caravans to the Red Sea are swelled on the route by small parties with the produce of Abyssinia—wax, coffee of an inferior quality, ivory, buffalo-horns, hides, *ghee*, honey, and mules. The list may appear limited, but little inducement is offered to the trader, either by his own unsettled and oppressive government, or by Turkish apathy on the coast; and provinces are left desert that are capable of growing many valuable articles for commercial purposes, while those that exist are but half-known, and the quantity of those in use might be multiplied fiftyfold by encouragement. Amongst the products of Abyssinia, not considered as of value at present, I may mention aloes, aniseed, castor-oil, senna, ebony, gum, hippopotamus-teeth, saffron, and sulphur.

Pepper and other spices are now imported from India, while there are numerous districts fit for their growth between the Red Sea and Enarea. The quantity of coffee might be immensely increased under a tolerable government. Among the nomad tribes on the coast, an extensive trade in hides, salt-meat, and horns might be created. Should means of destruction become more generally known, the quantity of ivory would be much increased. Gold and copper veins might be found. The valuable *zibbad*, now monopolised by the King of Enarea, might be reared all over Abyssinia, where, though the cat exists in a wild state, no one has ever thought of domesticating it, which would be an innovation.

Cotton cloth is the universal and only dress of the country, and cotton is imported from Cutch, while Abyssinia should be capable of producing it largely for exportation, and of a much superior quality. Besides the tropical rains, the means of irrigation are everywhere abundant; while the excellent quality of the soil, and the mildness of

the climate, would render that resource unnecessary for most plantations. Owing to bad government, fertile lands near the sea have been abandoned to flocks and herds for a breadth of 100 miles between the coast and Abyssinia; and plains of sulphur at 70 or 80 miles from Massowah are unknown to the Turkish governor, that article being imported in small quantities from beyond the sea.

Everything is transported on horses, mules, or donkeys; and the large caravans, moving very slowly, are often a year in journeying from Enarea to Massowah, a distance by the road of about 750 miles. The slowness of their progress is owing partly to the natural difficulties of a rugged and mountainous country, without roads, but still more to the embarrassing institutions of the tribes or nations through which they pass. The despots of the monarchical Gallas, as Enarea—where, as I have said, the richest produce is found, and which town is the great mart of this part of Africa—must be propitiated by presents and flattery. The slave-trade is a great source of revenue to those kings; and for this reason the Christian merchants seldom transact business so far in the interior, leaving those wealthy reservoirs to the Moslem traders in human flesh, through whose influence all that part of the country is gradually adopting the Mahomedan creed.

Enarea is frequented by traders from Zanzibar and Tajoora, from Massowah and Khartoom, from Darfoor and Kordofan, and, it is said, even from Darsala and Timbuctoo; but even the frequenters of that depôt seem to know little of any tribes on the equator. Constant as are the wars between tribe and tribe, the merchants are protected by all, and escorted to the limits of each province, where they are received under a temporary truce by their friends in the other. Should there be an intervening wilderness, the trader must trust to his own weapons and a stout heart.

When the caravans, having left the dominions of the King of Enarea, on the road for Massowah, enter the territories of the republican Gallas, not only each tribe, but each influential individual, and each one who has a hut on the line of march, must be propitiated. As the best way of effecting this, the merchants camp on the frontier of each district, under the protection of some influential inhabitant, and there make their bargain with all those who have claims along the line of road. These claims being settled, which may perhaps occupy a month or six weeks, they move on to the next district, and with each tribe the same operation must be repeated. This system continues until they arrive at Basso, the southern province of Abyssinia on that road. To reach this halting-place, they must cross the River Abbai, or Blue Nile, through whose valley is the most dangerous part of their progress. This wilderness, a hunting-ground for wild beasts, hot and desolate, contrasts strongly with the fertile crops of Goodroo that they are leaving, and the fresh pastures of Gojam that they hope to reach—a hope not always realised. Hundreds of Galla horse lie hidden in the long grass and thorny thickets, apprised, by numerous scouts, of the numbers and quality of the approaching caravan. The Abyssinian chief of Basso, it is true, furnishes a strong escort; but, not unfrequently, convoy and caravan are cut off almost to a man, and that fatal spot, yearly the scene of deadly combats, is dreaded by the merchant, and rouses all the energy of the traveller. Such are some of the labours and dangers of the traders to Enarea.

After reaching Basso—the trading-depôt being named Ayjubay—they are in comparative safety; but the perils they have passed are almost preferable to the endless vexations and exactions of the Abyssinian institutions.

The system of customs is, in fact, a struggle betwixt the

merchants on the one hand, and on the other the Negadeh Rases, who farm the duties in the large towns, and numerous small military governors, who exact what they can—this system leading necessarily to loss of time and smuggling, and often to bloodshed.

A Negadeh Ras, or chief of merchants, is appointed in six towns of Abyssinia—Ayjubay, Derrita, Gondar, Sokota, Doobaruk, and Adowah. In five of these the officer is a Mahomedan; at Doobaruk, somewhat inferior in importance, he is a Christian. Paying fixed sums to the great chiefs, they are permitted to screw all they can out of merchants, and keep in their pay large bodies of armed men to enforce their severe regulations. They are also obliged to do feudal service for the chief when called upon. Each Negadeh Ras establishes numerous minor posts, where the merchants are harassed for small sums, and with the military claimants they must compound as best they can. The right of pasturage and trespasses are fruitful sources of contention and delay. It is true that the richer traders generally keep on good terms with the great chiefs by constant presents and flattery, and escape pretty easily from his followers; but those on a small scale are plundered unmercifully, and their whole property sometimes confiscated, on the plea of smuggling, true or false. All are despised by the military, and, for fear of future consequences, are obliged to receive nightly into their houses insolent and riotous soldiers, who, even when receiving hospitality, scarcely deign to disguise their contempt. They are also in constant fear of being claimed by the chiefs to extort money.

The merchants from the province of Walkait, bordering on Sennaar, have another danger to encounter. Bands of negroes, called Shankallas, in bodies of 500 and 1,000, often occupy the road in ambush, and sometimes

succeed in surprising and slaughtering an entire caravan. This feud is uninterrupted, and no quarter is ever given. When the merchant has settled for his vexatious tolls, and averted with success all human enemies, he has also to encounter the difficulties of raging floods, precipitous mountains, frightful roads, and wild beasts that destroy his mules. Their situation would be much bettered were Abyssinia under one master, instead of being ground by so many chiefs, each of whom frames despotic laws in his own province, and often makes the forced friendship of a merchant for his rival, or the compulsory exactions of a rebel whom he himself cannot subdue, a pretext for a heavy fine.

The frontier provinces of Teegray towards the sea, Kalagooza and Hamazain, are now disorderly republics, save a tribute forced on them by the arms and the fortune of Oobeay, and will probably soon entirely detach themselves from the shaking fabric of Abyssinian society; and here there is no law or protection for the trader, save such moderation as self-interest may teach the villagers on the road. Combats are not unfrequent; but as it is known that the caravans will fight to the death in behalf of their property, being generally all they possess, even the most rapacious are afraid to push matters to extremity. The merchants also make friends of the most influential proprietors.

On arriving amidst the Shiho tribes, between these provinces and the coast, through which they must pass to reach Massowah, they suffer great extortions under pretence of guides, and permission to pass through this territory, inhabited by Mahomedans, who acknowledge no sovereign, either Turk or Christian, and amongst whom each man claims a share of the booty. Having scrambled through these valleys, the produce of Enarea at last arrives once in the year at Massowah, where the merchants, if

Christian, were formerly subject to insult, violence, and injustice; but of late years, if not encouraged, have at least been treated with decency and moderation—a result to which I may, without vanity, believe myself to have contributed.

The manufactures in request in Abyssinia are almost all British: red cloths, calicoes, silks and velvets of all kinds, printed cottons, &c., are imported from Bombay, as well as red and blue Indian bunting, raw silk, Surat tobacco, and Indian manufactured silks. English sabres and firearms are much in request, but are prohibited by the jealousy of the Turks at Massowah. Matchlocks only were admitted formerly, but of late years percussion muskets are in great demand. In all things they cry out for English goods. Some kinds of Egyptian cloth sell in large quantities, and also American drill. Trieste sends glassware and beads, which are required principally for the slave-dealers; and the frankincense of Arabia supplies the Abyssinian churches.

It is unnecessary to dwell at present upon the probability of developing the commercial resources of the Gallas. That they possess them in abundance unknown to themselves is certain, but their most important districts are so distant from the coast, that no European merchant could risk in person so hazardous a journey. Nothing but the establishment of a firm government and an enlightened system in Abyssinia can much influence the condition of these tribes. The Abyssinian merchants will, however, communicate whatever impulse they may receive from the coast, and push on into the farthest provinces with increased vigour. The Abyssinians are greedy of gain, and a desire for European luxuries already exists. The stimulus of capital and protection on the coast would soon cause a great change in their domestic policy, convert their grass wildernesses and thorny forests

into thriving plantations, and create as large a commerce as can exist in a country where water-carriage is hopeless, and even the introduction of waggons must be the task of years, owing to national prejudice, rugged elevations, abrupt valleys, and the utter absence of roads and bridges.

While the nobility of the country is entirely military, there is a kind of middle class, composed of the more influential proprietors; these, however, from the exigencies of the times, are also warlike, and must protect their homes and their ploughs, often by the lance and the sword. The most powerful of these are found in the deep valleys of the Nile, the Takazzee, and other large rivers. These rivers form vast clefts in the face of the country throughout their course, of several miles in width, at the bottom of which, at a depth of 3,000 feet, they plough their way betwixt high and precipitous walls of rock. The valleys thus formed are intercepted by rugged watercourses, whose torrents are unfordable in the rainy season. The soil is most productive, and the parts not cultivated are clothed with almost impenetrable jungle. The paths that conduct the traveller through these regions descend along the face of several ranges of precipices, over masses of rock, and frequently through passes that a hundred men might make good against an army.

From these peculiarities, that present conversely the difficulties of a mountain territory, the character of the inhabitants is brave and independent, and, led by some great proprietor, they often defy all the efforts of the military chieftains. This proprietor is usually a large cultivator, and possesses numerous cattle; he is judge of the district by common consent, and without appeal. The elders, however, always give him their advice; and as he does not pretend to any superiority, save that of

wealth and courage, and is always simple in his habits, there exists a real liberty and equality throughout the society, with the advantage of union under an acknowledged head in moments of danger. Under his orders the youth of the district make predatory expeditions against the Gallas or other neighbouring nations, or prosecute their endless blood-feuds with some adjacent Christian clan. These agricultural lords are of great importance to the military rulers, who, finding it difficult to seduce or force them to submission, flatter and caress them into an occasional contribution; but their valleys being rich depôts of corn, when provisions become scarce one of them is marked out for plunder, and, by secresy and surprise, the attempt is sometimes richly successful, though often the troops are overwhelmed, and cut to pieces, while toiling up the steep and gloomy passes and thorny forests, by the equally well-armed and more active peasants. They generally also receive the 'shirt' I have mentioned, or robe of silk, to give them military rank, and attach them to the party of some chief. Occasionally they will follow him to war, but rarely on any distant expedition. They are rich, hospitable to a proverb, proud and manly, and usually skilled in the chase, as these provinces afford ample hunting-grounds, abounding in large game.

The peasants of these districts, enjoying a genial climate, live almost in the open air, but, though hardy in youth, they soon grow old; they manifest the same impatience of restraint and love of liberty as mountaineers in other lands. There are also rich proprietors on the plains and highlands, with family influence and some wealth; but these, from their constant contact with the soldiery, who despise and insult them, supply their want of strength by politic wiles, and have not the manliness and simplicity of their compeers of the low countries.

The cultivators of the soil—the small farmers and peasantry—though struggling with many difficulties, form a numerous class. In spite of bad government, military oppression, and the constant devastations of war, they bear, directly or indirectly, the whole burden of taxation and the large standing armies. Though seldom wealthy, they are rarely in distress, and appear attached to their way of life. Soldiery are constantly quartered on them, except in some districts that always turn out *en masse* to resist, and where the troops dare not venture.

Villages may be seen everywhere in Abyssinia, perched on hills, hidden in most inconvenient hollows, and far from water. There are two good reasons for this: in the valleys the borders of the streams are infected with malaria; and on the plain, if they are too easy of access, they are nightly infested by crowds who demand or exact hospitality. On any frequented highroad many a ruined hamlet may be seen, deserted by its inhabitants on this account.

In seasons of war and anarchy an influential countryman becomes more valuable as a friend than any chief; and can, through the ties of relationship, forward goods and messengers in safety to a distance, when a soldier dare not quit his camp. These are generally entrusted with the collection of revenue, and are often made responsible for it; they are like the Indian zemindars.

A whole province of cultivators, in times when the military are engaged elsewhere, will meet by accord, and some thousands of them will attack another province, destroying, burning, and bequeathing feuds to distant generations. In their culture they would be laborious, were it not for the priestly device of saints' days, which forces the whole population to be idle for a third of the year. They plough with oxen, and weed with some care; they leave their fields fallow, or change the crop, as

experience, or rather tradition, has taught them ; and dig, where they cannot plough, the sides of almost precipitous mountains. The most productive crops are obtained on the ground most covered with stones, which they are careful not to remove. During the rainy season a rich verdure clothes every part of Abyssinia that has any prospect of reaping the harvest in tranquillity. Irrigation is practised wherever necessary, the numerous rivulets rendering it an easy task. No fences are ever made ; and during the night, when corn is ripening, boys with slings keep up a constant warfare with the wild boar, the addax, and the porcupine ; in some districts large fires are necessary to scare the herds of elephants, and everywhere the watcher is placed on a high platform, to be in safety from the hyæna and the lion. In general they are intelligent, but ruder than the soldier.

From their present industry, I think that in this matter of cultivation they might improve, if they had a more peaceful government and some security for property, and could be persuaded that men may improve upon their fathers—that it is better to cross a river by a bridge than to wade through a dangerous torrent ; or that a mill for grinding corn is preferable to a slave-girl. The fields in the neighbourhood of the towns, where military license is in some degree checked by the priests, and the ravages of war are less felt, are highly cultivated ; land there sells at a good price, and is eagerly sought for, showing that the sweets of tranquil labour are at least appreciated. If, however, the government were not strong as well as peaceful, even tranquillity might have its dangers, especially in Teegray. As soon as the countrypeople gain large profits, and mead or beer inflames their blood, the violence and pride of their disposition lead them to aim at power, and, without regard to their means, to attack and disorganise society. They express this 'inflation'

by one word in their own language, which serves as the apology for almost every act of folly, and the inhabitants of Teegray have become a proverb in this respect. I am tempted to give one anecdote to illustrate the phrase. A few years since seven men of Hamazain, with no other following, marched through 100 miles of country to Adowah, to overturn the existing powers and establish their own sovereignty, shouting war-cries and invoking the assistance of the Virgin. This is an extreme case, but describes well enough the disposition of this curious people. Each man considers himself as born to great destinies, and the smallest spark sets fire to his ambition. This is now owing to the long-continued weakness of the government and the absence of any body of proprietors who are interested in keeping order. Here almost every one thinks he has something to gain by anarchy.

The prosperous or adverse condition of a village depends almost entirely upon the rapacity or moderation of its immediate chief; and the ryots of a harsh master would soon leave him to contemplate empty fields, but for a law that empowers him to seize them, and force them to cultivate or to give security for their share of all imposts. The villagers are further interested in preventing desertion, as, though only three inhabitants should remain, they must pay the whole sum at which the village was originally assessed.

The imposts are numerous, but vary according to the traditionary customs of each village. They pay a certain portion in kind to the Ras, or other great chief, and sometimes a regular tax in money; besides this, they must furnish oxen to plough the king's lands. Their immediate governor then takes his share in kind of every grain (say a fifth), and feeds besides a certain number of soldiers at the expense of each householder: he has rights to oxen, sheep, goats, butter, honey, and every

other requisite for subsistence; he must be received with joy and feasting by his subjects whenever he visits them, and can demand from them contributions on fifty pretexts —he is going on a campaign, or has just returned from one; he has lost a horse, or married a wife; his property has been consumed by fire, or he has lost his all in battle; or the sacred duty of a funeral banquet cannot be fulfilled without their aid.

There is in every village one hereditary officer, who cannot be displaced on any pretence; and it is this institution alone that preserves some appearance of order, in the absence of all written documents, amidst the whirl of revolutions, and the rapid succession of dynasties and governors. This humble officer takes one-tenth of all that he collects for his chief. When the latter is changed, he informs his successor what is left of the last year's revenues, of the boundaries of his land, of the amount of imposts, of his various privileges, and all the little secrets of the community, so that in a short time the new governor is as much at home as the old one. The amount of traditional knowledge and memory of these persons is often extraordinary. The boundaries that he has to define are very simple—a brook, a bush, or a stone mark the limits of a village; but when their neighbours' fields, as often happens, are interlaced, it is a complicated task, and gives rise to endless litigation, often to violence. In forest or plain, covered only with grass and jungle, and here and there a heap of ruins, should a village be rebuilt and cultivation resumed, some such ancient peasant is soon found, who demands his post, and points out from memory the boundaries; the descendants of the former inhabitants are sought out under his directions, and under a lenient governor all is restored to its former condition. When land or houses are sold, numerous little children are called to receive a handful of peas, and

are useful afterwards as witnesses from these juvenile recollections.

Servants in Abyssinia have an easy time of it, if their work be judged by an European standard. At first sight, an establishment of eight, ten, or fifteen servants may excite wonder as to the purpose for which they can be employed; but—I speak not of a small household, nor that of a chief—one carries your shield, and whenever you go out he saddles your mule and accompanies you, and in the house he makes himself generally useful about your person; another makes your mead, arrānges it, and is also perhaps a gunner, and supplies you with game; another is doorkeeper and order-keeper generally. One or two, older and wiser, are counsellors, and their knowledge of the country, and of customs and tricks, is of the greatest service; another has charge of the corn, watching that the maidservants do not steal, and arranging the allowance of all the rest; others are grass-cutters only, according to the number of your beasts; another is a wood-cutter for firewood, very necessary in a country where they have no coal, and the wilderness is free to all.

Of maidservants, two or three are almost indispensable, as they have to grind, by manual labour, the corn for all the rest, clean the stable, and cook—relieving one another under the inspection of the *Ajaz*; they make beer for the servants or yourself, if you wish it. The smaller articles of consumption necessary to be purchased also consume much of their time in marketings, as there are no shops; they make the bread of the house—no small labour on a journey or campaign; they carry all the cooking utensils, gourds for water, &c. on their backs; they bring water from the brook—which alone in some towns is the work of one—for the mead, for drinking, for the horses and mules, for cooking purposes, and so on; and, however idle may be the life of the Abyssinian male domestic, I

know no country where the female works so hard, save perhaps the 'maid of all work,' seldom resting till late at night, even at midnight grinding, and frequently up before cockcrow. Tired from the march, no matter how late, water must be brought, fuel collected, supper prepared by the soldier's wife, while the man erects the temporary hut; and before daylight, with a huge load, she must march again, whole troops of them singing, and lightening the way with jest and story, to the great amusement of all passers-by.

The wit of the women is generally superior to that of the men, and they are more fearless, joking even with their master as he passes, who also not unfrequently returns them jest for jest. It is through trifles such as these that an Abyssinian master becomes beloved—by giving the leavings of his bottle to his servants, now and then exchanging a pleasant word, by relaxing with them in play, and noticing them sometimes with a judicious familiarity: each servant likes to feel that his master thinks of him occasionally, and to receive a mouthful from his hand makes him happier than much wages.

The people of Teegray are certainly, by far, the most faithful and trustworthy race of servants in Abyssinia, and fearless of travel, whilst the Gojamee is the most false and addicted to theft. In three years I only positively knew of two cases of theft in my house, and one was by a black Sennaar slave. Now this, let the reader understand, is high praise, for articles, to them of value, are constantly left indifferently about the house; lock and key I seldom used even for money, generally giving it into the keeping of some one of the domestics; and yet more, they were repeatedly sent to distant provinces, bearing sums that were to them a fortune, and other valuables, with which it would have been easy to have quietly walked off to any part of Abyssinia that suited them,

far beyond the reach of punishment. All this time they received no wages, and made no stipulation when we parted, trusting to whatever I pleased to give them—such as the occasional gift of a horse or mule, a cloth, a sword, a shield, &c. On my journeys I have found them, in the main, staunch and brave, ready to run if their master bid, but not to leave him.

Altogether I found the system of master and servant much more agreeable in Abyssinia than, for instance, in India, where you have a number of useless or almost useless domestics, who refuse absolutely to perform any but their express duty, who consider themselves no way bound to fight for you on a pinch, and whose religion it is to rob their master on any given opportunity. In Abyssinia no servant—at least I never found one—would refuse, if they saw you in difficulties, to clean the stable or to make the bread (grind corn they cannot), though these, being the occupations of women, are considered degrading, particularly the latter. In sending them to market, of course you must select the most honest to make purchases, while the rest carry home the corn and other provisions. This occupies all hands one day in the week. Another admirable point in the Abyssinian servant generally is, that he will sustain hunger with cheerfulness and good temper to an extent almost incredible, particularly to one who sees the voracity of their appetites when they obtain food.

They eat, upon principle, to repletion when they can, as they say it is good for the frame; if they are obliged to fast, they play and sing the more merrily, and pull their belts a little tighter, on purpose to keep the devil out of an empty stomach—no complaints, no murmurings. 'Ah! we were well off at such a place,' say they; 'now we have a turn the other way,—that's quite proper.'

Such, in general, are the people of Teegray as servants—

honest, courageous, faithful, but somewhat peppery. On the other hand, the Gojamee, though, in serving those of his own soil he is perforce tolerably faithful, yet even with these their own proverb may suffice to show his propensities: 'A seven years' servant, father of seven children, will run away stealing a common grass-cutting knife.' On the day you clothe him, he will probably disappear; nevertheless, the load they will carry is proverbial, and as grass-cutters they are unequalled. Their sarcastic wit is so keen and so constantly exercised, their speech so frequently intermingled with proverbs, inuendoes, and *doubles-entendres*, that it is difficult to understand them.

One reason for the superiority of the Teegray servant is that Teegray is the only part of the country where regular wages in any shape are paid. I do not speak of the horseman and the gunner, but of the household servants of a *mugozo* or rich man—his umbilta-players, his shield-bearer, his ajaz, &c. Nay more, if the Teegray servant wishes to leave his master, he does so openly, demanding the wages due, which are seldom withheld, and the master can be sued for them if refused. In the Amhara country, not only are the wages withheld, but the bamboo is applied to the applicant for dismissal, his cloth is taken from him that he may not run away, and he is sometimes even put in chains. Many quarrels arise on the score of having received a man into service who has left that of another. It is considered an act quite contrary to friendship in the person who receives him, and quite opposed to propriety and justice, though the unfortunate domestic has perhaps served for years without other recompense than the scantiest clothing and little food. From these different systems it arises that the lad of Teegray remains faithful even when serving an Amhara master, while the Gojamee early learns to consider the

relations of master and man as disguised enmity. Begemder in this, as in most characteristics, is the intermediate phase between Gojam and Teegray, as it is in geographical position, while superior to both in the elegancies and courtesies of life.

When speaking of servants, it must never be forgotten that the feudal system in Abyssinia renders the terms soldier and servant almost synonymous. Your servants have little idea that they should remain unarmed, and do only the civil business of your household, as they would then be regarded as women; thus, owing to the unsettled state of the whole country, all servants carry arms except those of the priesthood.

Another curious trait in the Abyssinian character is that letters are never signed or sealed. It never appears to enter their heads that others may write in their hands, and, singular to say, I believe this never, or very seldom, occurs.

Letters are not much used (of late years, however, somewhat more frequently)—all correspondence, even at the greatest distances, being confined to verbal communications by confidential messengers. As in this way each man has his individual post, a large establishment is rendered necessary, and being swift of foot is one of the first qualities of an Abyssinian domestic; if to that, readiness of tongue be added, he is invaluable. Owing to this system, the treatment of a servant sent on a message is regarded as the symbol of the respect or affection for his master. The recklessness with which the Abyssinian sets off on a journey, on foot, of 400 or 500 miles, without food or scrip, and almost always barefooted, is something curious, and at a moment's notice too. On long journeys two are generally sent together, for fear of accidents, which, from sickness, lameness, wild beasts, and rainy torrents, are not, as may be supposed, unfrequent.

The intercourse of the sexes in Abyssinia is unrestricted, and unrestrained by any sense of morality. All unmarried women are perfectly free to indulge their inclinations. At the same time there is an entire absence of indecency.

The women of Abyssinia are not by nature particularly unchaste, and still less are they excited by extraneous circumstances; the romance of life is unknown—all is real; and when the imagination is tranquil, as regards the passions at least, the reality can seldom lead to great excesses.

In general, the Abyssinian woman can easily persuade herself of a liking for any person that may be her temporary husband, for the marriage-bond, except where property is in question, is so slight as to resemble concubinage, in which, as in other points, a resemblance to the Jewish institution may be traced; and, with equal facility, a separation costs only a few tears, to be dried by a quickly succeeding lover; but the proverb 'on revient toujours à son premier amour' is nowhere more exemplified than here, and the worst of rivals is invariably the first discarded passion. In such connexions there is, perhaps, less of real immorality than the freedom of intercourse might at first suggest; and the degrading system of purchasing, *tour à tour*, the favours of a sex whom man, in his fantastic wisdom, alternately deifies and tramples on, is everywhere unknown, with the exception, perhaps, of the towns of Adowah and Gondar—the former the resort of Greeks and Armenians, and the latter having taken a profligate turn, I have little doubt, from the Portuguese, who for some time occupied its environs.

Owing to the free, and still more to the premature, intercourse that thus prevails, cases of barrenness are somewhat more than frequent in Amhara; while the Teegray women, who are generally less irregular, are

far more prolific. I have not witnessed, nor do I believe that any such feasts as that at Gondar, described by Bruce, can now take place. This is partly owing to the incursions and domination of the Mahomedan Gallas, and the consequent more strict separation of females, and their nonadmission to public tables in the mixed manner he describes.

On all subjects, of whatever nature, that concern our physical condition, there is no circumlocution in Abyssinia, which to the stranger, when first his ears become familiar with the language around him, is singular and repulsive. In the mouth of man or woman everything has but one straightforward name, which is used by either sex, with perfect freedom, in all societies; at least this holds good amongst the Amharas, whilst in Teegray it is confined to the male sex, when females are not present. It must be remembered that it is a consciousness of grossness that causes the moral degradation: here such consciousness is entirely absent. They are never taught to suppress their thoughts, and they use the simplest words to express them. The blame lies with the priests, who studiously hide from them the doctrines of the Gospel, lest their own iniquity should be disclosed.

While, however, it is true that there is no shame in any way felt as regards the intercourse of the sexes in Abyssinia, it is right to state that there is no outrage against appearances; and the utter unconsciousness, on the part of all, of any wrong or humiliation therein, gives a peculiar tone to their immoralities, that renders it difficult to be very angry with this shamelessness. Another curious point is that men and women are not considered fairly married until they partake of the Holy Sacrament together, when that which was before a civil contract becomes a religious and binding one. All priests are supposed, *ex officio*, to enter into this lawful state on their first marriage,

and they make this supposition a cloak for every vice. Other men and women, when they find sufficient resolution to abandon their agreeable freedom—which is, generally, when age has sufficiently cooled their blood, and grey hairs make them reflect on their approaching dissolution—are from that time faithful and true to each other. This convenient doctrine is of a piece with the general practice of Christianity throughout the country.

The women of the Amharas, in which I include Gojam, are gentle, amiable in their address, kind of heart, finding it easy to say 'Yes,' almost impossible to say 'No,' patient of temper, affectionate in return for the smallest kindness, and of humble pretensions: in person they are agreeable without being beautiful, and seldom with good figures. They are kind and hospitable to strangers.

The Teegray women, with whom the Agows may be classed, are disagreeable, generally, both in face and figure. Shrews, hard-voiced, claiming equal rights with their husbands, masculine, with little tact, and petulant, they have the advantage of being far more faithful.

The duties of women comprise the whole of the domestic labour, the men doing only three things—soldiering, ploughing, or mercantile affairs, and all such matters as can only be performed by journeys. In the house a man does nothing, and the time of all the women is generally fully occupied from daylight till dark. Even the wives and concubines of wealthy men are never entirely idle, as the spinning of cotton for their dresses is unceasing.

A wife must, at daylight, sift the corn for the household meals, then grind it by hand upon the grindstone, leaven it, bring water from the brook for all daily uses on her back, prepare onions, pepper, and all materials for their homely cookery, fetch wood for the fire, bake the bread, cook the meals, and make the beer—a toilsome operation, and seldom done except in a household rich enough to

keep one handmaid at least; and besides these multifarious duties, she has to trudge to all the different markets, have a scientific knowledge of prices, weed the corn at certain seasons, and take care as she best can of the children Providence may have bestowed upon her. From the error of indolence the female sex is at least free in Abyssinia.

The dress is inelegant, but not incompatible with a tolerably cold climate: a shirt with sleeves to the wrist, made quite loose and descending to the ankles, of finer or coarser cotton cloth, is the universal under-garment. The richer women wear the same made of white calico, lined and embroidered rather handsomely in floss-silk of various colours. This shirt, with a strip of the same material round the waist, and a similar piece loosely thrown over the shoulders, is the sole dress of the poorer females: the upper classes wear, besides, a pair of trousers when riding, which is also handsomely embroidered; and over this a cloth of the finest and lightest fabric, snow-white, or (those who can afford it) a blue silk mantle, sometimes embroidered, and sometimes lavishly ornamented with silver-gilt bosses and drops. This is worn when abroad, and the face is then closely covered with the mantle or cloth, so that nothing but the eyes can be seen. The poorer and even middling classes have no concealment, and visit or receive visits freely. For ornament they wear half-a-dozen silver chains round the neck, also silver ornaments of various shapes, supposed to contain charms against sorcerers and disease, silver rings on their fingers, and other silver drops of an oblong form round the ankles, that rustle when they move, a pair of very small earrings, just visible, and occasionally a long hair-pin worn in the plaits of the hair, which is useful as well as ornamental. The hair is plaited in various forms by all classes, though on the death of a

relation they shave the head, and fresh butter is profusely used, mixed with oil of cloves, sandalwood, or other scents. Flowers, that in all nations more or less charm the female sex, are at a complete discount in Abyssinia. The fingers and toes, which in many are small and elegant, are dyed in a root called *insoosilla*, that produces the same rose tinge as the henna of the East, and then the Abyssinian beauty is complete.

And now I must confess that these African ensnarers are as fond as their male companions of the universal mead, and that to be intoxicated with it in no way disgraces them in the opinion of their fellows; though women above the lower class confine such debauches, of necessity, to their private apartments, and to the knowledge only of the husband, who, with that indulgence that characterises the Abyssinian, is in nowise astonished or angry. From habit they have great self-command on these occasions, and nothing worse occurs, in general, than a sounder sleep than usual. It is only the higher classes of women that can obtain this luxury.

If I dwell at some length on these points, it is, I think, with a legitimate object. It would be easier for me to say, that the Abyssinian nation is immoral in conduct, and indecent in phraseology, and so dismiss the topic; but this would give the European reader a very imperfect idea of their character, for the proper appreciation of which, unknown as they are to us, every little trait should be delineated.

Euphuism is still in use in Abyssinia, women in particular adopting mutual names, by which they address each other—as 'my mirror,' 'my heart,' 'my heart's friend,' 'my enchantment;' and even allusions to matters that have occurred between them—as 'my jealousy,' 'my forgetfulness,' 'my peace,' 'no more we quarrel,' and suchlike phrases. Men, in the same way, adopt such terms as 'my shield,'

'my stronghold,' 'my defence;' and to women of the lower class, they give such names as 'soft lips,' 'curd teeth' (signifying white), 'pretty friend,' 'exciting sister,' 'man-slayer,' which provoke witty retorts.

The game of chess, the most widely-spread and admirable of games, is found also in Ethiopia, and is denominated *Sunteridge*. I mention the name, as it may afford matter of speculation why it should differ so entirely from the names under which it is known in other parts of the world, and all of which, I believe, have sufficient approximation to each other to admit of a common derivation.

The chessboard consists of the usual number of squares (64), and that in use by Abyssinians is generally a piece of red cloth, the squares marked out by strips of black sewn across at equal distances. The chessmen are made of ivory from the elephant or hippopotamus, or lighter ones of horn; the former are ponderous and massive, and all simple in their form—the difference being just sufficient to mark the distinction of the pieces, and with no ornament or fancy-work.

The number of the pieces corresponds with ours, and the only difference in their arangement on the board is the placing of the two kings opposite each other.

The names and powers of the pieces are these:—at each extreme, as our 'rooks,' are the *derr*, moving as the rook precisely; next to them the two knights, or *furz*, the same as our knights; next to them are the *pheels*, or bishop. This piece moves obliquely, like our bishop, but can only move or cover three squares, including its own; it cannot stop at the knight's second square, even if vacant; at the same time it can pass over any interposing piece on that square, or any other. The king (*negoose*) and the *furz* occupy the two centre squares, the king the same as with us; but the *furz* has only the very limited powers of moving one square in any direction, taking only obliquely,

however. The pawns (or *medaks*) are the same as ours; in every respect there is no obligation to take.

The game is commenced in a singular manner, and in this consists one of the excellences of a good player, as it frequently decides the fate of the game. Both parties move as many pieces one after the other as they can lay their hands on, and continue to do so till one takes a pawn, when all proceeds as with us; up to that time the confusion appears great to a stranger, yet each keenly watches the moves of the other, and changes his tactics as he sees occasion, frequently withdrawing the moves he has already made and substituting others, so that he may be in the more favourable position at the moment of the first take, whether by himself or his adversary. The game then proceeds as with us, varied only by the difference, that I have described, in the powers of some of the pieces.

The next peculiarity is in the manner of giving checkmate, all not being equally honourable. For instance, a checkmate with the rooks or the knights is considered unworthy of the merest tyro—that is, these, though assisting in throwing the net round the enemy, must not deal the fatal stroke. Checkmate with the *furz* is just endurable, and with one bishop is tolerably good, but with two applauded—that is, so entangling the king that he has but two squares free, which, being commanded by your bishops, you check with the one, and mate with the other. Mating with one, two, three, or four pawns, the two latter particularly, is considered the *ne plus ultra* of the game.

Another peculiarity in the game, that renders this selection of your checkmate more meritorious, is that you must not denude the adversary's king of all his capital pieces, and, in fact, it is almost necessary to leave him two: if you reduce him to one, say bishop or knight, he commences counting his moves, and you must checkmate him before he has made seven with that piece; and as you cannot

take it (there being no mate with the king alone on the board, or with only pawns), he moves it in a way to obstruct you, and you, consequently, frequently fail from the shortness of time allowed, or are obliged to give an ignominious mate with a castle or knight, which is hailed almost as a triumph by the foe.

Furthermore, if you are a superior player, and wish to make a game of it, you will find it advisable to leave two good pieces to your adversary—say rook and bishop, or rook and knight—as if you leave him only *furz* and bishop, for instance, he will probably force you in self-defence to take one of them; and in the other case, having still hopes of winning, he will struggle until you, having arranged your pieces so that you have the mate desired in hand, may take one or not as you find most convenient. A pawn arriving at the eighth square takes the powers of a *furz*.

It will be seen, I think, that the game under these circumstances is less brilliant and more tedious than ours. There is, however, still ample scope for developing the powers of the players, and showing the difference in their abilities. The great point is in the skilful arrangement of your pawns at the commencement, and a careful defence of them during the game, as it is generally by their moves that you so hamper the adversary's king, as to be enabled to select the ground on which to give him mate. A piece is not considered moved till settled on the square, and your hand withdrawn from it.

The horse of Abyssinia principally flourishes in the countries now occupied by the Gallas, who almost entirely supply the Amharas with them. As a general rule, the horse is seen to least advantage in Teegray, better in Semen, next in Begemder, then in Gojam, and only in perfection in the Galla countries. In Teegray the horse is bred in Hamazain and Inderta. In the former they

hold mares in great esteem, and now and then a tolerable horse is produced in the one or other province. The people of Semen purchase their cattle from the markets of Gondar and Efagh, and, being passionately fond of riding, they pay high prices for indifferent beasts, so much so, indeed, as to have become proverbial. Among the people of Teegray, generally, few good horsemen are to be found, and the exceptions are those of Inderta, or those who have learnt horsemanship amongst the Amharas.

The countries that supply Begemder, Semen, and Teegray with their horses, are principally the Wallo Galla and Worroheimano, with some few from the Agows of Damot. The markets of Begemder, to which they are mostly brought in numbers, are, in point of situation—first Estee, next Devra Tabor, then Efagh, and lastly Gondar; to these the people of Teegray and Semen, as well as of Begemder, resort.

The horse of Worroheimano is generally strong, hard-hoofed, and swift, but, as far as I had opportunity of judging, I should give the palm to the horses, as well as to the horsemanship, of the Wallo Gallas over all in this portion of Ethiopia: they are active, turning readily at speed, wonderfully surefooted, fearless, excellent on uneven ground, handsome, and spirited; and though, to an eye accustomed to the English horse, that of Abyssinia appears small, yet in the Galla countries they are equal, in many respects, to those of the Nedjdee tribe in Arabia. The horses of the Wallo, and of Abyssinia generally, are extremely docile and good-tempered, and they will generally follow their master if he dismounts, or remain quiet till he returns to them; a horse of fifteen hands is large, and few exceed that height, as far as the eye may judge. The horses ridden by the Gallas are very spirited, many indeed too fiery; but it is a notorious

fact that they never sell a horse that has not some defect; and while, in the country of the Amharas, chiefs only are in general well mounted, the poor Galla may have a splendid horse; though latterly the customs of the Wallo Gallas and their government have become so much assimilated to that of their neighbours, that it is becoming dangerous for a friendless person to possess a fine horse, for fear of exciting the chief's cupidity. The horses that are reserved for their own riding in battle are usually fleet, but I do not think they could match the Arab in a long course at speed; they are light upon the bit, this being considered a great merit in their style of warfare. The Wallo horse, which is never shod, slides down the steep hills, on his hind-legs and hams, like a cat; and in galloping over the *gwassa* of their native hills, which I have elsewhere described, they place their feet on the tufts with extraordinary precision. Indeed, though, in a plain, a larger horse, from his stride, would necessarily have the advantage, they are peculiarly adapted to the hilly country; generally, as a horse of high blood and spirit, they are a race not to be despised, though, I think, inferior to the Arab in endurance and strength.

The qualities most valued in a horse by an Abyssinian are thus described: he will say, 'He is a bay with four white legs, white forehead and nose, nine spans high, of a fiery spirit, in speed swift as a vulture; he will turn in his own length with a thread; his tail is thin, his mane a cubit long; in turning he does not change the position of his neck and tail; raising his legs in his gallop, he does not seem to touch the ground; he never tires, his marks are lucky, and his feet are iron.' Of colours, the most prized are, in their order, that above described—black with four white legs and forehead, black legs and no white on the forehead, chestnut the same, iron-grey, white if perfect, and above all cream colour with black mane, tail, and

hoofs. The lucky or unlucky marks consist in certain curling hair on the forehead, under the belly, on each side of the neck, &c., on which the Gallas particularly, and the Abyssinians generally, like the Arabs, lay great stress.

The price of a good horse among the Wallo Gallas, in the Worroheimano, and in Aijjo, among themselves, is about nine or twelve dollars, and the usual price at which the Amhara merchants buy for the markets of Begemder, is about three to seven dollars for an inferior animal. The people of Semen frequently purchase horses, at Gondar and Efagh, their nearest markets, for twenty-five to thirty, and as high as sixty dollars. In Teegray, horses formerly used to obtain in proportion a higher price than in Semen; at present, however, since Oobeay has governed the country, the native chiefs have not so much superfluous cash, and the prices are more on a level.

In Gojam, again, the markets are supplied from the Gallas of Kootlai, Jarso, Borona, and Goodroo, and the Agows of Damot. The horse of Agow is large and handsome, but usually hard-mouthed, and not spirited generally, as the Galla horses, nor as healthy. Of the others, those of Jarso are, I think, most prized in Gojam; some fine horses also, and larger, are obtained from the Boronas from time to time, and the chiefs frequently import their favourites from the Wallo Gallas, and also from Leeben to the southward of Kootlai. All these Gallas also, in general, as well as the Wallos, seldom suffer a good horse to pass into Gojam, in spite of the influence of some of the chiefs in the Valley of the Nile, who are nearly allied to them by blood. Basso is the principal horse-mart in Gojam, but they are sold in several other towns, as that of Boorree, in the Agow country; there being, however, no influx of strangers to purchase, as in Begemder, these are not so numerously supplied as the markets of that

province. Horses are also bred in considerable numbers in different districts of Gojam, but not sufficient for their wants, nor so good as those imported.

The country of Bayt Amhara may be considered, as regards the production of horses, on a level with the Wallo Gallas. In Aijjo, again, the breeding of horses may be considered on the same footing as in Worroheimano, its neighbour, but on a somewhat less extensive scale. In Waggera they are commencing the rearing of this useful animal, and the experiment is said to thrive well; and judging from the cold climate, the vast pasturage, and the extensive plains of that district, it would appear as well calculated for this purpose as any of the Galla countries. The partial breeding in the district of Semada and other parts of Begemder, does not permit of their being considered as horse countries.

The Abyssinian horse, if the owner be a poor man, is fed on hay during the hot season, and on green grass, with perhaps a little salt, in the rains. The great man takes more care of his favourite steed. In the hot weather, *i.e.* from January to June, he is fed on green grass—which, having run to seed, has no purging effect—and also as much barley as he can eat, once or twice a day: sometimes, though rarely, on oats, which are scarce, and he licks salt once a week or so. He is never groomed, but allowed to clean himself by a good roll on the best piece of grass that can be found. The Abyssinian horse is not, like ours, indulged with a separate stable; the Amhara master likes to have him always with him, and he is tied between two posts, facing the centre of the apartment, so that the first sound which salutes you, on entering, is the tinkling of bells suspended from his neck. He is also fed with barley-flour mixed with salt and a little water, and if thin, with linseed and *nook*, the plant from which they extract oil. An admirable recipe for fattening, and

considered infallible, is the dried meat of the *malkoko*, a little animal found in the rocks of the river, and neither rabbit, rat, nor guinea-pig, but something like all three. Barley-flour and salt are thrown into the water given him to drink. Thus fed, his coat becomes sleek enough, but his ribs are too well furnished to please an European eye.

From July to the end of September is the principal time for *cullub*, or feeding up: during the rains he never stirs out (indeed, even in the hot weather, the Abyssinian chief exercises his horses very little); he is then put on a soft grass diet, has salt given to him *ad libitum* in balls, his barley is stopped, and in August violent purging doses are administered of *koso*, fresh butter, and other medicines with the same view, whether in health or not; and perhaps this is necessary to prevent the ill consequences of months of rest, and the want of sufficient exercise. After this, in October, they usually change their coat, and after a little galloping are sleek, glossy, and fat for the ensuing hot season. Fresh butter is particularly patronised in Agow-middur, and this is the general system of diet pursued by all Amharas. Grain soaked in salt-and-water is also given, and those who are poor sometimes substitute grain for barley. In the low countries, as Walkait and others, maize (or *doora*) is given, as barley is not found. In the country of the Wallo Gallas the system is very different, and to this, as well as to their climate, must be attributed the superior strength and endurance of their steeds, as Semen is a colder country. Grass, save by the highest chiefs, cannot be procured, owing to the high state of cultivation of the country, beyond a little pasturage here and there; for the rest, he is fed entirely upon barley-straw, the staple corn of the country, and barley-grain as much as he pleases to eat, and this all the year round; while the corn is growing, if the owner be rich, he perhaps gives him from time to time a bundle of the green stalks. In

place of salt, he drinks occasionally at the salt-springs found in these districts; he is kept in constant and active exercise, and, consequently, the spare ribs and development of the muscles of the loin and quarters, are much more pleasing to the connoisseur's eye than the fat, sleek, and prancing chargers of the Amharas—and, indeed, these latter have but little chance against the Wallo horsemen. They know nothing whatever of bleeding, save by slitting the ear with a razor, or attempting awkwardly to find the vein in the inside of the foreleg, when, if two or three drops issue, they are satisfied, under the idea that there is a mysterious virtue in the mere issuing of the blood, however small in quantity. In all parts of the country, there are two classes of horses, the spirited steed, and the pack-horse or hackney; these latter are used as beasts of burden, though sometimes ridden by the Gallas, who seldom use the mule, but prefer the hack.

Bidf is the most prevalent disease among horses in Abyssinia. This is a breaking out, commencing usually with the legs, but when less violent on the back, weakening, and finally rendering him useless. It is attributed by the Abyssinians to a particular kind of grass growing in the low countries, but I imagine it to be owing more to the unfavourable climate in which that grass is found; at the same time, it is certain that a horse kept strictly in the house, and never suffered to graze, may be preserved from it even in the worst districts, while of those which graze, few escape it. This may also be owing to the better feeding of the horses of those who can afford to keep them in the house entirely. Some few persons pretend to possess a secret remedy for this disease, and cures are confidently spoken of by them, but, in general, a horse that is attacked with it is considered only fit for a speedy sale before it becomes too apparent. It is not

the *bursautee* of India, as it is independent of the rains. The great remedy for all sores of the back, arising from falls or otherwise, is by searing the part with a red-hot iron, and if suppuration has taken place, they cut out the diseased flesh with a razor; they also practise what we call 'firing' for weakness in the sinew. For bruises of the foot, where matter is formed, they extract this by boring, and then pour in, over a red-hot iron, honey, goat's fat, and oil, stopping up the aperture with a piece of cloth; this is an excellent remedy. The Gallas of Jimma, and others to the southward of Goodroo, are in the habit of giving their horses boiled fowl, and the blood of oxen to drink, also bread of *teph* or barley; some Amharas also, to be singular, and from fondness for the animal, give them mead to drink, and occasionally honey and meat in balls.

The horse in battle is as well aware of the nature of the contest as the rider, and not only turns, at the right time, without the use of the bridle, and obeys each signal, for speed or otherwise, with wonderful sagacity, but some even avoid lances thrown in their direction, by moving from side to side adroitly; habit is everything in the horse, as in man, and I conclude that they both enjoy it.

Horses are never shod, but the Amharas cut and pare the hoofs from time to time; the Gallas, however, from their constant exercise, find it needless. The Southern Gallas make wooden platforms for their horses to stand on during the rains, on account of the mud and filth that accumulates from the purging quality of the green grass, to the injury of their feet. With the Wallo Gallas and the Amharas, a bed of stones fitted together is preferred, and they use no litter; indeed, it would scarcely do to pamper and clean the horse, as with us, for though, doubtless, his spirit and appearance would be improved, yet his liability to colds and sickness would be much

increased—the more so, as in campaigns he would be obliged to remain in the open air, in all weathers, and without covering of any kind, for only the richest and greatest chiefs can afford horse-tents. The Galla horse, indeed, is not often exposed to this, as his master returns nightly to his home, after having done his duty in the day's *mêlée*. The Abyssinian is very cautious not to take the saddle from the horse's back too soon after a gallop; while the Galla at once strips it off, and allows his horse to refresh himself with a roll on the grass, previous perhaps to renewing a fight, or even in the middle of it. In the same way, the Amhara never, under any circumstances, allows his horse to drink, save at the stated period, once a day, while the Galla, in the midst of an engagement, loosens his girth and leads him to the brook. Mares are little valued even for breeding, and the horses in use are universally geldings.

Horses, as well as human beings, in Abyssinia receive names with a meaning to them, and great men or warriors are generally better known by those of their horses than their own. In the country of the Wallo Gallas and in Worroheimano, the men frequently address each other as 'father of such a horse.' These names are taken sometimes from the colour of the horse; in others their signification is warlike, as *Dampto* the leveller. An Abyssinian who has even no horse takes the name of one as his war-cry, and curious enough it is to hear the various war-cries uttered simultaneously in a campaign, or on any alarm.

CHAPTER VIII.*

HOT SPRINGS OF GORAMBA—THE BATHS AND BATHING—A QUARREL—START ON A VISIT TO TOKO BRILLAY OF AMHARA—GALLA GOODENA—YA AMBA—THE BACHILLO—GWA MAIDA—TOKO BRILLAY'S FATHER—ARRIVE AT TOKO'S CAMP—ITS DESCRIPTION—CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE.

In the month of June 1844, I left Mahadera Mariam (Bell being still in bad health), to pay a visit to the hot springs of Goramba, in the neighbourhood. The district is called Woodo, and is inhabited by the most thieving and riotous population in Begemder, if not in Abyssinia. These hot springs are found in various places, but especially in the neighbourhood of the Nile, and are much frequented, being considered of sovereign virtue in all complaints.

We had a servant of the Ras with us, and, with Mr. D'Abbadie and his company, mustered a pretty strong force—a thing essential to bathing in any comfort, the whole affair being a continued scramble for precedence, where the strongest come off the best. You descend from the rocky eyrie of Mahaderatoo (as it is sometimes called) into a low warm district, about the level of the lake, where fever is to be dreaded at certain seasons;

* [EDITOR'S NOTE.—The Manuscript of the journey from Gondar to Devra Tabor, and the first meeting there with Ras Ali in 1844, is not forthcoming. This is of the less consequence, as both are described in subsequent chapters, in the account of the Mission in 1848. It is sufficient to mention that Mr. Plowden reached Devra Tabor in 1844, and resided there and at Mahadera Mariam in that and part of the following year, and that from these places he visited various chiefs and countries, which are described in this and the next seven chapters.]

it is thickly wooded, the rich grass affording pasture to numerous herds. I rode D'Abbadie's horse, and after losing my way, and various wanderings, to the great alarm of my servant, who had mounted my mule and kept up with me, I reached the spring about noon, D'Abbadie galloping up, in the most approved Abyssinian fashion, from another direction, at the same moment.

The hum and noise of contending bathers might be heard at some distance, and there was a temporary encampment of straw huts erected by them. The rain had already commenced here, and it was therefore necessary to build some habitation. It was too late, however, to begin, so we took possession of such empty huts as we could find, and proceeded to the bath.

Here a party was on the point of emerging, and we, having made a judicious arrangement with the *shoom* or governor of the place, he proclaimed that ours was the next turn, which I firmly believe was far from the truth, as about a hundred people, seated on the opposite bank, were eyeing the entrance, with eager looks, when we arrived. Our fierce-looking suite, however, with their plaited hair and weapons, were not to be gainsaid; and we sat down under a large tree, while our followers urged on the exit of the occupiers of the bath.

The first thing that struck me was the elegant hut they had erected over the spring, and the next the number of human beings it had contained, who issued from the bath, reeking, as our servants entered to clear the water. The hut was about ten feet in diameter, with a little doorway about three feet high, and was loosely built of grass and sticks, open to the rain, the wind, and even to the gaze of the spectators; while a few feet below was a second-rate bath-house—much smaller and more ragged—where the more miserable victims of disease were bathing, in the ditch formed by the surplus waters of the upper basin.

We ordered cloths to be thrown over the roof, and while the water was settling, entered, as usual, into a contest of wit with the rest of the expectants. One party, from Lasta, begged us to admit them first, pleading the length of road they had come, when, it being sagaciously remarked that Jerusalem was a trifle farther, the laugh was turned against them.

On entering, the plunge from the cold air up to the knees in water of 127° Fahr. may be imagined. Had it not been for very shame, I should have withdrawn my legs as rapidly as I had immersed them; but my cloth was already whipped off by an attendant, and I had only the choice between a desperate fire of laughter, and a cauldron of almost boiling water. Setting my teeth, and recalling to mind the fortitude of the gentleman, who being, for some mysterious purpose, in the copper vat when the building took fire, described his feelings in his pocket-book until he became senseless, I groped my way to a couch of sticks on a level with the water, and examining my limbs, found them like underdone beef; afterwards, by dipping in a finger and a toe at a time, I gradually became used to the heat, till I could plunge my whole body under the water (about 2 or $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet in depth) for a minute together, and even hold my head under the spout. The spring was conducted through a hollow bamboo, with a small spout inserted in it. Here we remained stewing for nearly an hour, drinking copious draughts of honey, water, and linseed—the 'correct thing,' as near as I can give the Abyssinian phrase—and also of the water itself from the spout. It has a very pleasant though peculiar flavour.

In these baths both sexes enter promiscuously. During the whole period of bathing, however, the greatest decorum prevails, and the men live separate from their wives during this period. There is a superstition that if

any one impure should enter the bath, a large snake will issue from the spout, and this is universally believed. This, and other like notions of clean and unclean, may be traced to the remnants of the Mosaic institutions so prevalent in the country.

The feeling of cleanliness, and also of languor, upon quitting the bath is pleasant enough, but I do not think it is good for people in health, and I certainly did not benefit by it at the time.

One evening we left the bath sooner than usual, a few elder servants remaining, when, as we were lying luxuriously in *deshabille* in a large hut, a great outcry in the direction of the spring startled us; I heard the name of one of my suite repeated, and in the next instant that he had killed some one. Knowing that, if the man happened to be of the district, the affair would be serious, we hastily equipped ourselves, and assembled our followers; and proceeding to the spot, where there was great weeping and wailing of women, we saw, by torchlight, what appeared to be a slain warrior, lying motionless, and knots of men, with spears and shields, running confusedly about in the darkness. Hearing sundry denunciations of ourselves, we made a hasty retreat; and stumbling over tethering-pegs, and nearly running against a kicking stallion, we reached our shed, and held a council.

We first enquired into the particulars. It appeared that the fallen hero (a Woodo man), being valiant with strong beer, shortly after our retirement had rushed into the bath, telling our servants, who were gradually clearing out, to be quick, with some insulting expressions; upon which, after some words, they very unceremoniously pushed him out, adding probably a few blows. In a minute or two he had returned fully armed, and with his drawn *shotel* had made a thrust at one, which, being partially caught

by a cross-beam, had only inflicted a cut on the hand of his intended victim. One of my youths, being ready of his hands, and seeing that the armed Hector had obviously the advantage of them, who were *in puris naturalibus*, had snatched a rafter from the dilapidated hut, and administered it with such good will, under the ear, that the *shotel* flew one way, the shield another, and their owner a third; and he was supposed to be dead.

We had now the pleasure of perceiving about 200 spearmen, collected from the neighbouring village, surround our dwelling that we might not escape, and swearing to have our blood for that of their kinsman. Had he then died, nothing could have saved us from a sanguinary fight, from whch few would have escaped—these people being, as I have said, regardless of authority, and fearless of consequences. While they were wavering and consulting, seeing that we were in good force, the governor of the place, with other men of consequence, approached with the Ras's servant, who had summoned them in the name of his master, telling them that they were responsible for our safety; they also brought the news that the victim had shown signs of life, and the first-drawn blood (an important point) having been on our side, the matter was adjourned till the following morning, and the collected forces dispersed, their chief assuring them that their relative was in no danger, and that the affair would be judged in due course; so we slept tranquilly.

After a solemn conclave, held in the morning with the elders, witnesses having been duly summoned, we were pronounced the aggrieved party; and the man being likewise considered out of danger, an apology was made, and the quarrel soldered up. In a fortnight after, he died of the blow, and that part of the country was, of course, subsequently dangerous to any of us.

In the meantime I returned to Mahaderatoo, and find-

ing Bell better, determined to make an expedition to the market of Bosso, in the country of the Wallo Gallas, returning to him, if I could, before the rains set in. I was the more induced to this, as it was a path in which no European had preceded me, and Bruce (by report) had spoken highly of the Amharas, the province through which I must pass. The fame also of Toko Brillay, the chief of the latter, had spread far and wide throughout Abyssinia, as being the Christian bulwark against these, the most formidable of the Gallas, from whom his good lance had wrested the fair but conquered realm of his ancestors. I took with me six servants, and a merchant of Mahadera Mariam as guide, leaving orders for my head-man, and three more, to follow me as soon as they returned from Korata, whither I had sent them on a message to Kasai.

We started in an E.S.E. direction, and passing the great market of Estee, got well drenched in a heavy shower, auguring ill for our expedition. Finding a herd of deer, I broke the leg of one with a bullet, but could not capture him. After this delay, being benighted, we found nothing but a scattered village, where, after much quarrelling, we obtained quarters far from each other. In the night I was attacked by such legions of fleas, that I could no longer endure it, and calling my shield-bearer (who never left me), we spread our skins in front of the house, and slept alternately, the hyænas rendering it unsafe for both to sleep at once; they, indeed, kept up their dismal howling close about us all night, and I have seldom been less refreshed and more pleased than when daylight appeared.

With some difficulty collecting my scattered domestics, and loading my one donkey, we pushed on gallantly. The third evening we arrived at Galla Goodena, the last village before crossing the Bachillo, where there resides

a second-rate chief. As I sate on the ground near his house, he sent to ask if I were a Mussulman or a Christian: being assured of the latter, I was invited to enter; and the hospitable goat being killed, and strong mead produced, we were soon on the most friendly terms. He expressed great astonishment at the strength of my head, in not becoming intoxicated, and promised to assist me in every way on my journey. This man was named Basha Wonda, being chief of 100 guns in the service of Ras Ali.

The country in this part under his control is high, cold, and bleak—principally extensive grass-plains, with innumerable sheep on them. Little wood breaks the long distance to the weary traveller, and no journey is so fatiguing as one over extensive plains. It was safe, however, and we had enough of wood on the morrow, when, having quitted our hospitable host, we continued our journey to the Bachillo. On coming to the tollbar, we had, as usual, a tiff with the collector, he insisting upon taxing our baggage, with a view to a douceur, I offering to return to his master; as usual, I carried my point, and proceeded without molestation.

We descended a ravine of, perhaps, a thousand feet in depth, which is called the infant Bachillo, and ascended a mountain called Ja Amba, that stands alone between this and the grand descent. It is nearly square, and has only two approaches, forming a place of strength; but it is now deserted, and has become a wilderness of grass. A party of merchants here joined us, and a heavy shower fell, to our great discomfort. The descent, which is steep, is composed of sharp flint and jagged rock, to which I had contemplated opposing my sandals; but in the muddy rills that were now pouring down the track, they were useless; and painfully I was obliged to pick my way, barefoot and shivering. Passing through this

vast and gloomy valley, whose natural darkness was increased by clouds and fog, one feels a painful oppression, a sense of insignificance, amid the wild and stern aspects that nature here presents; and I listened with interest to the tales of fanatic monks, who doomed themselves to death in these deep solitudes, by hunger, by the deadly snake, or the lordly lion—which roam here, unmolested, amid congenial wildernesses.

We saw some rebels from the Ras's authority, who had hidden themselves in these impenetrable forests, where every pass might be defended against an army. We had some fears, but a fellow-traveller, who knew them, represented me as the friend of Brillay, with whom they were in strict alliance. At length we reached the river, whose width of channel, nearly half a mile, astonished me. The ford was now only ankle-deep, though the marks of the huge feet of the hippopotamus in the dry bed showed that there were pools of great depth, where these monsters, with the dangerous crocodile, were congregated, till the rains, swelling the stream into a sea, permitted them to revel freely in its tumultuous waters. The junction of the river with the Nile is but a few miles from this spot.

The rain had ceased, and the warmth at this level was so pleasant, that, though it was evening, we determined to cook the meal we had provided, and proceed on the ascent by moonlight. We made bread (*boorkoota*), as I have described before, and as the moon rose began our ascent. Scarcely had we gone a hundred yards, when the sky was involved in pitchy darkness, and the rain descended in torrents. The path was almost impassable, even by daylight, from the thorns and brambles that hung over it. It was in vain to think of sitting my mule; my cloth was torn off my back, my face and arms bleeding, and my feet cut by the stones, as I could not see where I was placing them. Even the Abyssinians could not get

on. We turned aside from the path, through the bushes, and cutting away the thorns for a little distance, lay down as we were on the wet ground—the beasts, saddled and loaded, standing amongst us, it being impossible to procure wood, fire, or light. Fortunately, the hyænas did not disturb us, and the poor animals, spiritless from the pelting rain, stood motionless till morning, though I often awoke with a hoof in unpleasant proximity to me. After this wretched night, we hailed the sun with joy, and without delay went on to the steep ascent, that we might reach the colder regions before the noonday heat. In one part there is a pass, where the beasts are obliged to climb up a stone only slightly rough in the centre, and nearly perpendicular, of about eight feet high, on each side overhung by perpendicular rocks. There were many of these dangerous and difficult passes in the Bachillo valley, where many are yearly thrown over precipices and killed.

Mounting higher, we were overtaken by the rebel chief, riding a beautiful mule, with two followers, going to visit Brillay. The path, winding along the ledge of a tremendous valley, in one place was so steep that everyone dismounted. I was too careless to do so, and urging on my mule, the animal, frightened at the steepness, missed the path, and got his feet over the precipice: as he fell on his side, I seized a shrub overhead, and let him slide from under me, at the expense of some bruises, and regained the path. Fortunately, this was here winding, and the beast fell on the next turn below us, nearly on my shield-bearer, and with his hind-legs over the precipice. The lad, who was active and brave, though startled, had the courage to seize the bridle, and, at the risk of being carried over, landed the mule on the path. It was a narrow escape for all of us.

Arriving about noon on the summit, we found ourselves

on another mountain, called Gwa Maida, to which only four routes led—three from the Bachillo, whose windings encircled it on three sides; and the other, a narrow neck of land, joining it to the country of Amhara. Here we gladly dried our reeking clothes, and bathed in a small pool, and then took measures to ascertain where Dejaj Brillay, the father of Toko, might be, this being his domain. We learnt, from a ploughman, that he had gone to shoot monkeys, which abound here; and which, as you wind up the valley, you see sitting in hundreds on the ledge of stupendous precipices, far above you, chattering unceasingly, and ever watching for their deadly enemy the leopard, to avoid whom they sleep at night in the most inaccessible spots.

In the evening Brillay gave us an excellent dinner, a venerable old gentleman presiding, at a long table, over boiled mutton, very fat, and with plenty of pepper. I thought him a very patriarch, but learnt my mistake afterwards. In the morning I went on to Toko Brillay, with a boy of his, Lowatee, whom I found at Gwa Maida. The scenery was beautiful: the valleys of the Nile and the Bachillo were visible from the neck of land along which we rode, with fertile fields just becoming green with the first rains; and a bright sky and invigorating air gave me the most healthy sensations that I had yet experienced since my wasting fever.

We arrived a little after noon at Kayt, the camp of the chief, and were admitted immediately into his house, perched on a rock. He was a man of pleasant countenance, small but vigorous in frame, very fair, and with grey hair, though only thirty-six years of age. The day was a fast-day, and so impatient did he become of dry talking, that a jar of *tejj* was ordered for us, to wet our mouths, till the hour of three; then came the usual dishes, and when we were refreshed, he became communicative

and playful. The window gave a superb prospect of hill and dale, with the lofty mountains of Wallo in the distance covered with fog. 'All this,' said he, 'I have conquered by my right arm, and with the aid of God. With thirty shields did I throw myself into my father's land, opposed by the treachery of my relations, the hatred and fanaticism of the Gallas, and overwhelming numbers in battle; but the God of David upheld me, and now all that you see is mine, and Christian.' The boast was true, for even his father and brother ceased not to plot against him. A hut with a single room was given me, which became my residence for three months, the Bachillo having become impassable in a week after my arrival.

On one side the camp was guarded by precipices; on the other a steep slope led to a large green meadow, covered with horses grazing, and watered by a small stream, that an hour's rain converted into a foaming turbid torrent. Opposite the camp rose the strong mountain-fort of Tedra Marian, on a table-land, so large as to contain seven churches and villages, with much ploughed land and many meadows. On a lower level was Waro, a province in itself, producing teph, maize, barley, wheat, and honey in profusion, with abundant sheep and cattle.

The character of the people of this district is the most gay imaginable. Universally polite, always smiling, and good companions, they are not even jealous of their mistresses, and an universal liberty reigns. Their vice is lying; no reliance can be placed on their word, but to a stranger this matters little, if the chief befriends him. Accordingly, I passed my time very pleasantly: we swam in the little river, ducking each other—the chief the gayest of the party; we drank *tejj* all day, and half the night. We galloped horses, and played *jereed*; we joked incessantly; nor was the reluctance of the not very fair sex to visit us quite insurmountable—a reluctance natural

enough, as I was the first white man whom they had ever seen. My breakfast and dinner was with Toko every day. I also bought some sheep, fifteen for a dollar, and my servant used the only gun I had to some purpose—shooting francolins, guinea-fowl, and *dookoola*, a very cunning antelope.

In the meantime, intrigues commenced to induce the chief to send me back to Begemder, which, however, he utterly disregarded, though I had incurred the enmity of his brother, by refusing him a sword which he ardently coveted, in exchange for two horses. My servant, whom I had directed to follow me from Mahadera Mariam, had been seized at Galla Goodena by Wonda, in revenge for two horses taken by Dejaj Toko, so that I remained with little money and only one gun, and some six servants.

I frequently saw Galla chiefs who came on a visit; they talked freely of their former battles without rancour, and even spoke of meeting again in the field. When we bathed together, there were often a thousand persons assembled; and Toko seriously warned me against the evil eyes and the Bouddhas, at which I laughed, and he believed I must possess a powerful counteracting charm.

CHAPTER IX.

COUNTRY OF THE WALLO GALLAS—THE LORD OF LEGAMBO—BOSSO—LIFE WITH TOKO BRILLAY—ATRENSO MARIAN—TOKO'S SON—HIS PROPOSALS—AMUSEMENTS AND REVIEWS—TEDRA MARIAN—LEAVE TOKO—RETURN TO MAHADERA MARIAM.

I GOT TIRED of eating and drinking, and determined to visit Abba Salaam, and secretly, if possible, to make a dash into the Borona, and even to the borders of Shoa. I asked Toko to forward me to the first-mentioned chief. He made many difficulties, but I overcame them; and with much reluctance he at last consented, stipulating that I should not take with me any firearms: to this I consented, as, young and fearless, nothing then appeared to me a danger. We left, five in number, in the month of August, the height of the rains, and were accompanied by a Galla, who had orders to recommend us to Ahmed Hooroo, the redoubted warrior who governed Legambo.

The journey was over grass plains, gradually ascending as we approached the confines of the Wallo. We were taken in for the night by a Galla neutral, who reminded me of the savage nature of my future friends, by accompanying me, if I went five yards from the door after nightfall, with his arms in his hand, as, he said, it was a necessary precaution.

It was intensely cold, and very foggy, the next morning, when we left his hospitable roof, and began the gradual ascent that led to the table-land, some thousand feet above the level of the Amhara country. The road, after passing through gloomy woods of pine and briars,

and along the side of dark mountains, looking down into ravines whence arose the sound of falling water hidden by dense fogs, at last led through long grass and heath alone: the scene reminded me of Scotland, with its bare hills rising around, the brown hue of the landscape, the rills of water cutting up the path in every direction, and rendering our progress very slow—and here and there bits of moss of the brightest green, puffs of thick white fog, and drizzling showers.

Approaching the Galla habitations, after a short descent from these hills, we find undulating plains with noble horses tethered in all directions, the brood-mares and their foals studding the meadows, interspersed with fields of barley. Here and there a cottage peeped out; trees were few, being used for fuel, and the Galla men were splitting logs for the fire, as we reached the habitation of the chief, Ahmed. The evening sun broke out in splendour, and from the hill on which we stood, at his door, we could see a deep valley below us, covered with masses of forest, which hid a broad torrent that hurried to the Nile, and divided us from the fertile plains of the Borona Gallas; whilst the outline of the Shoa hills was visible in a flood of light, and made more distinct by masses of dark clouds behind us. The scene was rich in beauty; but as I had not broken my fast for nearly twenty-four hours (as was usual with me on a journey), the reader may suppose that my appetite permitted me not to dwell long on the beauties of nature, but that I forthwith demanded a lodging, and some information regarding supper.

While our guide was still in conference with the chief in his hall, I examined the outside of the dwelling. Something approaching to a fortification had been devised: a stone wall some twelve feet high, in which were stuck stout beams of wood, projecting at all angles, and somewhat sharpened, large at the top and nothing below

to lay hold of, with a strong wooden door, sufficed for the defence of this most primitive chieftain; and considering that a Galla when off his horse is like a fish out of water, and that firearms are almost unknown, it must be admitted to be a very pretty stockade against a charge of cavalry.

I was shown at last, shivering with cold, into a small hut close by, and a fat goat was brought, on which we triumphantly dined, the cook-maid being provided by the chieftain—a handsome girl with hair half a yard long, who came armed with an immense dish of red pepper and butter, and a cauldron; into this the legs and shoulders of the goat were soon plunged, after an approved recipe, and we ate as much as we could. The owner, who had been out cutting wood, now appeared, and seemed rather astonished at our domesticity; but appeal there was none, so he slept on one couch, I on another—very hard, very narrow, and sloping at wonderful angles—and my suite rolled on the floor; and seeing that the hut was at least twelve feet in diameter, and not very full of domestic utensils, we were as comfortable and happy as could be expected.

Early in the morning, that is at daylight, we were called in by the great man. We found him sitting on the floor on a cow-hide, with another placed for me beside him, and the mead already under weigh. He was immensely fat, and must have weighed eighteen stone, and received me with much astonishment, probably never having seen a white man before; he ejaculated, without ceasing, 'Allah!' (being a rigid Mussulman), and eyed me askance in a most ludicrous manner. I may as well say, at once, that this continued during the six days that I stayed with him. The rain prevented us from going out, so we drank *tejj* without ceasing, Ahmed having a small tumbler constantly full beside him, from which he kept filling mine whenever half empty. We ate nothing all the first day—indeed, his

amazement seemed to make him forget food, prayers, and everything; so, after giving him a sword-blade the second day, I asked if they never ate in his country? whereupon it appeared that he lived almost entirely on *tejj*, and he ordered some bread and fresh butter with red pepper to be brought for me. This nearly choked me, so I took but two mouthfuls, and we continued drinking till eight o'clock at night; nor would he let me retire even at his prayer-time, filling my glass carefully first, and regarding me between the prostrations. He was not, however, quite forgetful of his worldly interests, begging and obtaining a sword of my head-servant; thereupon my servants also drank *tejj* all day, ranged in a row along the wall, or until they got so drunk that they could stand no longer, when they went home to sleep.

The thing was decidedly slow. On the second or third day came Ahmed's brother, who spoke much in the Galla language; and I heard him remark, amongst other things, how happy he should have been to have met me on the road—not, as the reader might innocently suppose, to greet me, but to have had the pleasure of killing me, and this with the sweetest smile on his lips! To their infinite astonishment (for they did not suppose I could understand a word), I reminded this gentleman that, in his eager haste, he had forgotten that two could play at that game, and that, perhaps, it was as well for himself that we did not foregather, as he had kindly wished. Here was wonder upon wonder!—a man not only white, but understanding the Galla tongue (though Heaven knows how little!)—and I was then pestered with questions, to aid me in answering which I brought out my vocabulary. They looked upon this with great awe, and evidently began to respect me highly. At last my fat friend brought his daughter to amuse me, a child about six years old, and very fair; whereupon arose a joke, the obese chief declaring that he

thought his fairer half must have known me in her dreams. This witticism being duly laughed at, he sent me into his harem, to see the lady in question, whom I found somewhat stouter than himself—a pleasant motherly old dame, who produced more mead, and made several violent attempts to feed me, which I resisted with much protestation. I made my visit short, and on my return, Ahmed made me a solemn offer of the fair child aforesaid to be my lawful wife, and of a fat portion of his dominions, on the simple conditions that I should abide with them for aye, and aid him in peace and war. I suggested the slight difference of our religious creed, but this appeared to be a trifling matter; and after much discussion, I promised to return after the Feast of the Cross and give him an answer, explaining that my pledged word to Toko would not permit of my remaining at that time.

I had previously formed the idea of rushing suddenly into Shoa, but he, like Toko, excused himself, on the ground of the danger of the road, and his promise to Toko to send me back safe. For all this, Toko's warning, that the Gallas were venomous in the rains, came to my mind, and I hastened to bring my visit to a conclusion. He gave me a horse—a spirited young bay, but very inferior to what he should have bestowed upon me—and likewise an order to remain at the market of Bosso, as long as I pleased, to buy a horse, and that the people should provision me—viz., a sheep, twenty pieces of bread, and a jar of beer morning and evening—during my stay. I tried the bay over a hedge on my way to Bosso, and he being unaccustomed to leaping, and my own head, though strong, none of the clearest, after the repeated stirrup-cups the lord of Legambo had pressed on me, I found myself comfortably deposited in the mud on the farther side of the fence. I washed my clothes there and then, by plunging into a handy brook, that was tolerably clear, and dried them by walking

fast, dispensing with ironing and mangling. I saw a beautiful chestnut feeding, and asked the guardian if it was to be sold at any price? The ragged scoundrel replied, with the air of a monarch, 'A chief's horse is never sold!' and then laughed derisively at the idea. I apologised with much humility, longing in my heart to give the fellow a sound beating, not less than my guide, who, in a poor-fellow kind of tone, pleaded my intense ignorance as a justification for my want of tact.

We arrived without further adventure at Bosso, where, after immense wrangling, many threats, and a very narrow escape from a duel between my guide and the owner, I at last entered a decent house. The owner was a truculent-looking savage, having been cut and slashed about the face in the wars in an awful manner; but your hard fighters are generally good fellows, and after I had asked him some questions about his honourable scars, and obtained the information that fighting was rather more frequent with him than dining, his countenance cleared up, and he slid off his best couch, which he proffered to me like a gentleman, and we forthwith became the best of friends.

We received our allowance of mutton regularly, and awaited the opening of the market for six days. During this time the son of a famous warrior, named Botta, came daily to see me; he arrived usually about eight in the morning, and sat on the couch opposite mine till five in the evening. Except the usual salutations, we only spoke once during the week, when I asked him what he came for? He said to talk, which he did not, and to look at me, which he certainly did, for his eyes never wandered, I think, during the whole of the above-mentioned period. He was very handsome, and, it was said, brave; his father was a desperate fellow, a very Achilles, whose lance could be thrown by none but himself. He was

accustomed to sleep during the fight, till told that his party was hard-pressed, when, mounting his horse and shouting his war-cry, he charged at once into the midst of his foes, who seldom awaited a second onslaught—horse and man being sometimes pinned to the ground by his Pelian javelin. He bled to death one day from a very insignificant wound, his first and last; and it is left on record that an Amhara who once dared to wound his shield, enjoyed a lifelong reputation for this feat of 'dering-do.'

On the market-day, I bought a very handsome grey horse, more like an Arab than any I had seen in the country; but found afterwards the truth of the remark, that a Galla never sells a good horse. He was very fast, but had bad action, did not carry himself well, was rather a runaway, and awfully afraid of powder. However, I paid for my experience to the tune of eighteen dollars; and having heard some unpleasant rumours, I gave out that I should start the day after the next, at daylight, and by the road I came. The next day, however, at noon, I suddenly gave orders to saddle, and in five minutes was on another road, which brought me in the evening, without accident, to the headquarters of Birro Gallin, the Fit-Aurari of Toko. I afterwards heard from Toko and many others that Widajoo, Toko's brother, having proposed to Davod Brillay to take me prisoner, and make me pay a heavy ransom in guns and money—insinuating, moreover, that were I killed by the ambuscade no great harm would be done, as I was sure to help Toko hereafter in his wars—that chief had laid a strong ambush in my way, which I had thus fortunately escaped. I was congratulated on the special care which Providence seemed to have of my person, to which I replied in a suitable strain.

It must be remembered that Adara Billay, another Wallo chief, had recently plundered Mr. Krapf, at the secret instigation of the Shoa king—a fact of which that excellent

missionary has doubtless a lively recollection, being obliged, if I heard correctly, to beg his way to Adowah in a very doubtful pair of pantaloons and an Irish-linen shirt, his sole property. Having thus escaped the fangs of Brillay, Billay, & Co., and having no more money, I resolved to pass my time as cheerfully as possible with my good friend Toko, who had, at least, some fear of God and some sense of friendship.

Toko indeed was charming, though I must admit that his court was very dissipated in most respects—indeed, often bordering on indecency; but as I cannot suppose such matters to interest my reader, I have not chronicled them, and pass on to graver history. Toko suddenly discovered a plot, deep in its ramifications, 'to push him from his stool,' being about the fiftieth with the same object. In this, as usual, his father and brothers, with Davod, and a certain dangerous cousin in Gojam, named Immer Sahalo, were the principals; but to this he was so used, and so singular was his clemency and *bonhomie* (for which, indeed, I never saw him equalled), that he seldom punished his brothers by more than a few weeks' banishment, and his father not at all. But a bosom-friend, who ate from his hand, and was implicitly trusted, was now implicated, and his defection stung deep. One evening, after continued joking and laughing, he caused him to be taken into custody in his presence; and spoke for a quarter of an hour, with a bitterness very unusual to him,—winding up with swearing that he loved and trusted me more than all of them, and ordering the traitor's horse to be taken to my hut. We then cheered him up, and as usual, after a fortnight, the said traitor, whom any other Abyssinian would have cut in pieces, was let loose, and afterwards banished. During my residence I never saw Toko inflict or order a punishment of any kind, and yet he was well obeyed.

Having finished our honey, this kind and sagacious ruler being unwilling to press on his subjects, already ruined by the Galla invasion, we now prepared for a tour. He informed me that there might be some onslaughts, if Davod should come, and told me to remain in his mountain of Tedra Marian; this I peremptorily refused, and we started. Toko had a curious custom, of being very grave at the beginning of a march, and then, in about five minutes, going off at full speed; nor did he draw bridle till we reached our halting-place for the night, perhaps five leagues off. Rain, mud, torrents, hill and dale were all as one, and I was often the only horseman who kept up with him; on arriving he would rush into the first good house he saw, tell me to take possession of another; and then, chatting to the good dames who were in charge, we would await the arrival of his suite.

The country was very beautiful, and very wet; but we usually lodged pretty well, and had plenty of milk. The crossing of swollen rivers was sometimes awkward. At one place, my mule carried over half the party, the water rushing like an Alpine torrent, and covering the saddle: two on the mule, and one holding the tail, was the order of crossing. Toko's mule, on the third trip, was tilted over, and his boy, holding my only gun, with it. 'The gun!' sung out Toko, and somebody seized it from the boy's hand, it being near the bank. The mule and the boy got out somewhere lower down, by an inexplicable piece of luck, and the saddle only was swept away. A few yards farther was another branch of this diabolical water, where I crossed over a natural bridge, being one sloppy mass of stone that was jammed between two walls of rock, with a fall of sixty feet thundering below, and covered with spray. I don't like these things, and felt decidedly nervous; but surmounted it for the honour of the nation, affecting to whistle, and otherwise adopting

a gay and cheerful air; fortunately, I was barefooted. We arrived on the third day at the mountain stronghold of Atrenso Marian.

There is but one approach to this, leading for two or three miles along a neck of land of some yards or more in breadth, with precipices on each side, and itself abounding in blocks of stone and abrupt turns, or precipitous steps, which might be defended by a few men against numbers, unless provided with artillery. On arriving at the mountain by this gentle ascent, we found large plains, well cultivated, and to all appearance a fine champaign country; but when you wish to quit this in any direction, you come everywhere upon vast precipices, leading down to the Valley of the Nile, which river may be then seen for thirty or forty miles, at a depth of five or six thousand feet below. Nevertheless, I believe that footpaths exist —dangerous indeed, and which a little powder and some pickaxes might soon convert into impassable surfaces of rock. The monkeys (which abound here), appear to know their way pretty well up and down, but they cling to fissures in the rocks like lichens. I noticed here a species of ape, or baboon, called in Abyssinia *chelada*, with this peculiarity—viz., that when alive, it has a patch of the brightest red tint on its breast, about four inches in diameter, which when dead, or even dying, disappears, and leaves only a dull grey in exchange. I did not notice that the reddish tint depended on any peculiar light.

The church of Atrenso Marian, though much defaced by the Gallas' invasion, bore the marks of ancient and elaborate ornament. The pious chief forthwith began repairs, putting his own shoulder to the wheel, lifting falling pillars, &c.; and having more zeal than architectural skill, pushed a beam upwards, without reference to its fellows, and displaced the roof, raising it some inches. The next beam, sufficiently solid, but not well fixed in the ground, lost its

perpendicular, and was on the point of falling on the prince's skull, when I—who had been an indolent spectator—fortunately caught it in its descent. Toko regarded this as a special providence, and that the Virgin had instigated his friendship for me to that express end. In Abyssinia, every human action, political or social, wicked or jocose, is at once referred, in some manner or other, to religion; and the appeals to God, to saints, and to the Bible form one-third of the conversation. They have no other literature than the Bible, which (owing to their utter ignorance on every subject) is incomprehensible to them in its true spirit, and is materialised in practice—a proof that human knowledge may well be termed, by Bacon, an excellent adjunct, and in nowise detracting from the ways of faith.

We sauntered about the land in this pleasant way for a fortnight. One trait was curious, illustrating the absence of jealousy in this good-tempered race. A friend of mine, on an occasion not worth specifying, offered me his *chère amie*, as one might offer the loan of a horse. Curious to know if the damsel was equally indifferent, I beheld her, comely as the cedar, straight as the young palm, and apparently not the least discomposed at the proposed transfer. Pretty as she undeniably was, to those who do not consider mahogany an unpleasing hue, I followed the example of Joseph Andrews, rather than of Tom Jones, and gave a paternal blessing to the amiable pair. I was informed that this was quite usual and permissible.

On our way back, Toko set off for home in his usual reckless manner, and was brought up, standing, by a small brook, which I leapt my horse over, to his astonishment. In attempting the same feat, he *landed* in the midst of it, being on a very sorry animal. He stuck to the beast manfully, however, and floundered out, going on at the same reckless pace over a plain full of holes, and

covered with fifteen inches of water. In the evening we rejoiced in the forgotten delights of *tejj*, and a good *hot* supper; at the end of which, being rather drunk, he brought in all the damsels of his establishment for my choice.

Toko had a nice little clump of sons—chivalrous boys, of whom even the youngest (some twelve years old) had fleshed his maiden sword in battle with the Galla. The eldest was a sworn ally of mine—a powerful young man of two-and-twenty, who governed the fine province of Waro. We were always wrestling, or swimming, or doing something together; and the chief became so attached to me and my rifle, that he offered me this province of Waro, with another in the highlands (the two maintaining a thousand horse) if I would stay with him; and moreover his sister in marriage—a beauty that was sung in ballads throughout the land, and broke the heart of neighbouring kings. To my mind she was beautiful, in every sense of the word,—with feet and hands that a princess might have envied, an elegant and rounded form, large black eyes, a well-set head and neck, and in the pride of youth—that is, about eighteen or twenty. I dwell on this simply to explain that I use the word 'beauty' in its European sense. Suffice it, however, to say, that all these temptations failed to induce me to forget my native land, though for a moment I was tempted, having my full share (and a little more) of youthful folly, loving adventure, not being averse to war, and rather admiring these tribes of Amhara and Gallas. We lived a jolly life in that delicious climate. Even my fever had left me, and with superb health, an appetite not to be appeased, and years full three-and-twenty, I still look back on those three months with a sensation of pleasure.

On St. John's Day we had a great feast, and what may be termed a review. First we played *jereed*—or rather they; for I did not join, having never before seen the

sport, and fearing I should commit some *bétise*. They rushed about in a confused manner, and at full speed—but with such command of their horses, that no accident ever happened—with large sticks, which they sometimes threw as a blunt lance, or struck a sounding blow on the shield of a flying adversary. After an hour of this, we sate on the ground, and the whole cavalry were drawn up at some distance, under their own chiefs. First, the chief of his advance-guard, with five hundred chosen horse, charged towards us at full speed, with loud war-cries, to within a few yards, when, Parthian-like, they disappeared as rapidly as they came, wheeling round so suddenly that they seemed to melt away; then, in another direction, we heard the trampling of eight hundred steeds with loosened rein, headed by Abagas. He came at this frantic speed to within two yards of our feet, and then, flinging his lance into the ground, before its vibrations were expended, was a hundred yards away, flying as if for life, with his followers spreading out from him like a fan, and ready to turn and enclose a pursuing foe—for such is the Galla manner. Other bodies, in all about two thousand horse, came up in this way, and then we mounted, and all formed a wild escort. Toko (as usual) selected the worst ground, and went straight down a steep hill full of stones and holes. I did not half like it; but the Gallas, with their horses on their haunches, were curveting down at their ease, or charging each other on the hillside, wheeling about as if on Salisbury Plain. Away we went—shouting, charging, lances pointing in every direction—dashed across the little river, and up a confoundedly bad pathway, to the camp, and rode up to the door of the chief, where he entered, and the horsemen rode away and dispersed.

In half an hour the feast began: cows were killed in profusion, mead was brought, and frantic warriors began to recount their deeds. The mead was given in large jars

to each man; everybody got drunk, except the chief and a few elders, who indemnified themselves for their abstinence in the cool of the evening.

Women, as guests, are never admitted at these feasts, nor can the actual public indecencies described by Bruce in Gondar be now found in any part of Abyssinia; and this province of Amhara is perhaps the most licentious at present, Gondar being the most depraved, while both are the most courteous.

After this feast I caught a severe cold, and had an ulcerated sore-throat in consequence, which kept me for a fortnight in my hut. Toko made another pilgrimage, and I followed him, about five o'clock in the evening, with one servant, trusting to my horse's speed to overtake him. Owing, however, to the torrents on our road, and the mud, at nightfall, we had reached no habitation; fortunately, there was a fine moon, and we led our horses, blundering through bogs and ploughed ground, till nine o'clock at night, when I heard a dog bark. We arrived at a house, and the host, with some friends, rushed out with lance, sword, and spear on the intruders; fortunately he knew me, and we were taken in, and refreshed with a footbath and supper. The next day I found Toko, who reproached me for my imprudence. News here reached us of the death of some near relative of Toko, and it behoved him to make a pilgrimage, to mourn in his mountain-of Tedra Marian, where he was to pass the Feast of Muskul, when I had determined to take leave of him. To avoid the crush and bad roads, I promised to follow him in a few days, and left the camp alone for that purpose.

The descent to the Valley of the Bachillo, that divided us from the mountain, was some fifteen hundred feet in depth; here, like all large Abyssinian rivers, it foams through dark rocks and tangled forests, with here and there

a spreading bank of verdure. The ascent on the other side was very precipitous. I was on horseback, and dressed in the Abyssinian costume; the otter-skin I wore on my shoulders caught in a broken branch of a tree in the steepest part of the ascent, and I was laid nearly along the horse's back, my head hanging over a precipice; with the slightest possible pull on the reins, I fortunately stopped my horse. The least motion would have sent us both over, the pathway being about eighteen inches wide. I remained thus—unable to make any exertion to free myself, it being all I could do to maintain my seat—for about fifteen or twenty seconds, when my shield-bearer, who saw my danger, with incredible efforts pushed up the hill, and, with much difficulty finding a standing-place, loosened my cloak from the tree. We entered the mountain by the only path practicable for beasts—a narrow way over some tremendous stones, which my horse passed with the greatest difficulty, though well broken—and arrived at Toko's house, where he was mourning in state. I was located in a neighbouring hut, and fed solely on a kind of reddish leaves and curds, on account of my throat, not yet well.

Tedra Marian is one of the finest mountain strong-holds in Abyssinia. There are only five paths by which a footman can mount, and these might easily be reduced to one, as the rest might be converted into impassable precipices. A table-land of at least nine square miles, as I guessed, with seven villages and their churches, built on the borders of the same number of running brooks afforded ample means for feeding the garrison; and cows, horses, goats, and sheep in abundance, with gardens of vines, citrons, and bananas, completed a most agreeable panorama.

I insisted on departing, and Toko at last assented, almost with tears. He left the mountain with orders that

I should remain there as long as I wished, and leave when I would.

The next day my horses and establishment came back. My head-servant—a brave and faithful man, whose loss in later days I shall ever regret—had been sent to the chief of Legambo for a horse he had promised to procure for me, but returned disappointed. He had had a quarrel with one of Toko's officers, arising in jealousy; but Toko took precautions that no meeting should ensue, and sent him over to me safely.

We left the next day by a very difficult road, and recrossing the Bachillo, ascended to Gwa Maida, the seat of Toko's father, old Brillay; but I had no second cordial reception. A scanty supper of a few loaves of bread sufficed us, however; and at daylight we started for Begemder, with no other provisions than a stout heart and our last night's meal. The way was long, nor did we pause for a minute during the whole day. The descent, of full 3,000 feet, was of necessity on foot, and very tedious, it being noon when we reached the river. The burning sun and sands recalled Massowah, and taking a draught of water, we commenced the ascent. At half-past four we had gone two-thirds, when I espied some *doora* (maize) in the jungle, and heard voices. Here I proposed to rest for the night, when my servants told me they were rebels, and we should have to fight for our lodging. I said we would try, at least, so, seeing my obstinacy, they employed a stratagem. I had selected my road, but was lost in the corn; so they called out that they had discovered another, which I took, and, mounting higher and higher, saw the village beneath my feet. This made me rather savage, but I would not return; and giving my mule to a damsel who had followed us from Tedra Marian, started on foot, and arrived alone on the top of the ascent just before sunset. One servant, with my mule, came up to where I sat gazing on the setting sun

and distant river—frowns on my brow, and hunger in my vitals. Just at dark off we went, and, having gone about a mile, reached water. This plain was called Ja Maida, with no human habitation for many miles. In about an hour my fellows and horses came up; it was pitch-dark, and a pelting rain added to our pleasures; the grass about us was seven feet high—no supper, no fire, no anything. The beasts were turned loose to graze, it being too dark to see to tether them. At length the girl, being ingenious, collected some brushwood and withered creepers, and I gave a gun, charged with powder only, to procure fire. My servant Negoosee, after attempting in vain, owing to the wet grass, placed his shield to receive the burning wad; but, not being great in physical science, fired at twelve inches' distance, and split it in two. We made, however, a small blaze, so laid down and slept as we best could. In the morning we were well soaked, and after an hour's search were glad to find our beasts, untouched by the hyænas and well fed, which we certainly were not, having fasted thirty hours. We had now a desperate hill to go down, and its fellow to ascend. Arriving on the other side of this valley, we reached at last the Plain of Begemder, in the province of Samada.

Here was supposed to be a custom-house, and of course 'stand' was the word. From a hill I sent Negoosee on horseback to explain, and pushed on. We were now all mounted. He afterwards told me he had shown the *douanier* a clean pair of heels, to avoid being put in durance, after having amused him for half an hour. At noon I at last saw land in the shape of a village. Followed by one servant, I galloped up to the biggest house I could see, and demanded hospitality. My manner was much in the highwayman fashion; but, fortunately, the good folks were just sitting down to a jolly breakfast, and were hospitable; so I surprised them by my feats in the

edible line, returning often to the charge; and leaving them with thanks, found my servant hallooing for me with a vast pot of curds in his hand. I drank this, and heard from him that they had all foraged successfully. We slept in a village near the camp of Dejaj Imam, whom I would not visit to avoid making presents; and here I encountered a messenger from Bell, who was still very sick, and a letter from Europe. The next day, leaving all but two of my suite behind me, I made a forced march of some seventy miles, and reached Mahadera Mariam at nightfall, to the joy of my establishment.

CHAPTER X.

VISIT TO DEJAJ BOURROO GOSCHO IN GOJAM.

LEAVE DEVRA TABOR—KORATA—LAKE TSANA—BOATS—HIPPOPOTAMI—BAHAR DAR—DISTURBED STATE OF THE COUNTRY—FURRUS WAGGA—CROSS THE AVA—MOTA—CHURLISH GOVERNOR—CROSS THE MOUNTAINS INTO GOJAM—NAZARETA—ARRIVE AT BOURROO'S CAMP—RECEPTION—HIS CHARACTER AND CAREER.

Soon after my return from visiting Toko Brillay, becoming disgusted with the Ras, the usual petulance of youth made me form, on the instant, the determination to visit Dejaj Bourroo, his mortal enemy, without an hour's delay. The idea was somewhat difficult of execution, as the few practicable passages of the Nile were strictly guarded, and it was proclaimed that all who were taken in the attempt to cross into Gojam, should undergo the penalty of amputation. On leaving Devra Tabor, I hurried, as swiftly as my mule would carry me, to Mahadera Mariam; and communicating my resolution to my companion, selected seven of the most resolute of my servants to accompany me, with two guns and five bucklers. The next morning, before daylight, I started for the town of Korata, having decided that the lake was the only safe route, being the least watched.

A day's rapid march sufficed to carry me to the most picturesque place in Abyssinia. Built on the side of a hill, its houses descend gradually into the waters of the lake, the green foliage of the trees mingling with them, and almost hiding them from observation. On one occa-

sion, as I had beheld it, it had struck me as a place of peculiar interest. I had been wandering the whole evening, with two or three servants, in pursuit of the large deer, called the *dufarsa*, that abound there, when about sunset we were startled with the cry of a lion, so close as to appear sometimes to be in the nearest bush, and causing me involuntarily to raise my gun. On arriving at an encampment of wandering Zillau, they informed us that our friend had been found by them the day before, asleep, by the side of one of their oxen that he had killed, and lamented much not being aware of my residence so near them.

Taking the road to Korata, on approaching the town, the moon, that had hitherto been hidden behind thick clouds, burst forth in one instant in full splendour over the lake, throwing into bold relief the dark mass hanging over its rippling waters, and defining beautifully a small island in the bay, with its church and trees, whose drooping foliage kissed their shadows; the hippopotami, pasturing in hundreds along the banks, were snorting and crushing among the reeds over one another; the wild boar, or the startled deer, would dash at speed across the path; and the roar of the lion, growing more noble and impressive as the distance increased, came sweeping down from time to time, answered by the harsher and more startling roar of another on our right. The scene was beautiful, but the King of the Forest, though charming in an episode or a menagerie, is by no means a pleasant companion in a night-march, so we hastened to our quarters.

On my arrival at Korata, I consulted with the friendly merchant, at whose house I usually took up my abode, and whom I could safely trust, who informed me that the land route, which crosses the Nile at its exit from the lake, was watched night and day, and that in the town

was quartered one of the Ras's great chiefs, who had been beaten by Bourroo's adherents on the other side of that river. We determined then to cross the lake at night, by the *tonkwas* that ply between Korata and the market at Bahar Dar, the nearest point of Bourroo's territorial possessions.

The *tonkwa* is the rudest boat, perhaps, ever invented by the ingenuity of man; it consists of a quantity of a large species of reed called *demgel*, fastened together, by strips of the same material, into something resembling a very shapeless canoe. A mass of the same, about two feet square and five or six feet long, is wedged into the centre to prevent it from collapsing, and to keep goods or people out of the water, which there is no attempt to exclude, though the extreme lightness of the material prevents the boat (if such it may be called) from sinking into it more than a few inches. After two or three weeks' use, when the reeds become saturated and rotten, it is thrown aside as useless. It is propelled by two men, one forward and the other aft, each with a long bamboo, which is used as a pole in shallow parts, and as a paddle otherwise.

Having sworn to secrecy the owners of two of these skilfully-constructed vessels, we engaged them, for a dollar, to embark us at midnight at a point some little distance from the town; accordingly, when the moon set, we duly met them at the rendezvous. Now, be it known, the Abyssinians of other parts of the country have as much dread of this lake, as the mariners of Columbus had of the Atlantic. With much difficulty I got four into each craft, sending back two of the men, who were to bring over my horses by land on the first good opportunity, the rest of my beasts returning to Gondar. We rowed silently for a few hundred yards, along the edges of a marsh of reeds, intending to pass the

time till daylight on a small bank, where we should find firewood,—when what appeared a black rock, a few yards ahead, startled us with a roar and a plunge that dashed the waters into foam. In an instant the whole marsh ahead of us seemed alive, though we could see nothing there: the bellowing and rushing of hundreds of hippopotami, that, issuing from the reeds, formed a semicircle of black dots in front of us, were tremendous, and contrasted strangely with the previous silence of the night.

The boatmen were aghast, the noise was deafening, and my servants would certainly have resigned their reversionary prospect of Paradise to have been safe on shore, in any part of the habitable globe. The boatmen told us to get ready our battery of two guns, and on the instant some five or six of the monsters, as if they had hitherto been holding a consultation, rushed towards the boats. When they were within six or eight yards, my gunner fired, and they retired to a more respectful distance; and there lay motionless, as though keeping guard, with their heads just appearing above water. My gunner, in his desperation, and his comrade, had valiantly drawn their swords; and when I informed them that they would make but a small impression on the carcase of our enemies, and that the gun had better be reloaded, I was told that the nipples and hammers had vanished in the explosion.

Farther progress was impossible, and we poled silently and cautiously into the reeds, where those who could disposed themselves to sleep, and the rest watched anxiously for dawn. When the stars grew pale and disappeared, so also did the heads of the hippopotami: gradually, one by one, they sank into the deeper water without a sound, and when the coast seemed clear we rowed away vigorously. Though several times they appeared startlingly near us, yet they are not generally mischievous in daylight, and we passed on our way. After sunrise, on entering a small

bay, we soon fell in with a family party of three of them. The largest, turning his head lazily towards us, yawned, and displayed a mouth, or rather a cavern, that looked capable of swallowing us, boat and all. I could not resist the temptation of snapping my gun at him; the cap was wet with the splashing of the oars, and missed fire, perhaps fortunately. He took no notice of the insult, and we bore out more into the centre, across the stream of the Nile, whose waters here, two days' journey from their source, flow in a distinct course amid those of the lake. I shot one afterwards that measured thirteen-and-a-half feet in length, and the largest I was told were eighteen or nineteen feet. The animal it is needless to describe, though I believe these differ in some respects from those of Nubia and Western Africa.

On landing at Bahar Dar, I proceeded to the Alika or Chief Priest, who, in a *geddam* or city of refuge, arranges for the accommodation of strangers. He has quite a reputation for sanctity, and I believe in this instance truly so. I found him reading the Bible, sitting under the gateway of his house, and was received with great civility. On offering him a present of some white calico, he refused it, saying that he never took presents, but that I might, if I pleased, offer it to St. George. My respect, however, for the church was not sufficient to induce me to make the transfer, as I much doubted the power of the holy saint to be of any service to me, and was by no means overburdened with goods and chattels, or the base dross so necessary in this lucre-seeking world. I pocketed my calico, therefore, and he directed an official to take me to an empty house, and promised to send my supper, for, though it was noon, Abyssinian hospitality extends not to breakfast.

We were shown into a circular straw hut of about nine

feet in diameter, where I spread my skin, and proceeded to reflect on my worldly condition and prospects. Besides my arms, I then possessed two dollars, a pair of shabby and nearly worn-out cloth trousers and belt, besides two turbans, some calico, and the sword I destined for Bourroo. I knew not whether my supplies would arrive from Europe, but it was certain that, if they did, it would be months before any could reach me. I had, however, an abundant stock of youth and health, and two horses *in posse*, if my servants did not run away with them, or the soldiers of the Ras catch them on the road.

The province of Maycha, that I was now in, is so notorious at all times and seasons for robbers, that it was reckoned impossible for a stranger to traverse even half a day's journey without being well-armed—particularly an European, reputed, of course, to be entirely fabricated of the precious metals. I ordered, then, one of my trusty servants to start at daylight for the camp of Bourroo's Fit-Aurari, about twenty miles distant, to represent the circumstances, and to request an escort. In the meantime, being exceedingly hungry, with a magnanimous disregard of the future, I converted one dollar into thirty pieces of salt, with two or three of which I bought a portion of a bullock, some bread, and a jar of beer, and we regaled sumptuously. In the evening a sufficiency of everything was sent by the Alika, and the remainder of our salts must last us till the return of my messenger.

Hyænas are so numerous here, that while yet chatting round the fire, on throwing out some bones, they snapped them up at the door: we shot two or three of them. They do not injure men, though a child would no doubt be an acceptable morsel. At night, on another occasion when I was here, one of these beasts forced his head in through the side of the hut, and dragged the skin of a bullock, which I had killed that day, from under the feet

of two or three domestics; one of them rushed out to make him drop his prey, when a demonstration, made by two or three others in his rear, forced the man to call loudly for help himself, and the skin was lost.

We passed five or six days in a quiet fashion, enlivened only by two or three brawls amongst the townspeople, when my two horses arrived in safety, by the assistance of a friend, who, although an adherent of the Ras, was the brother-in-law of the merchant before mentioned.

I was wondering at the long absence of my servant, when one afternoon the whole town appeared in commotion, sounds of weeping and wailing arose, and half the population of both sexes began to run along the road to the camp. I enquired of some female neighbours, who were beating their breasts, what was the matter, when they informed me that the master of the house I now occupied—a person much respected, and Bourroo's officer at the passage of the Nile here—who had been to the Fit-Aurari's camp, and had been expected back that evening with his brother, had been assassinated by robbers.

At dusk my messenger made his appearance, and gave us the further particulars, that a band of eighteen or twenty marauders—supposed to have crossed the water—had plundered some merchants; that the officer, on being informed of it, had, with only his brother and one servant, on horseback, pursued them; and that he had been found, by those who followed, lying dead, pierced with several lances, his brother scarcely breathing, and the servant—who was slightly wounded—fled; and that he himself had taken advantage of the stream of mourners to make a start. Moreover, he said that he had been tied two days by the Fit-Aurari as a spy, and that the said Fit-Aurari, far from sending an escort, would by no means believe that such a person as myself existed in those parts, and had promised to make enquiries, and then send an order to escort me.

This was all very well, but my last dollar was expended, and it was necessary to make a push: so next morning, before daylight, we started—myself and one servant; and being both armed to the teeth, and mounted on horseback, we made a most ferocious appearance. Though we were so early, yet we saw that two other parties, impelled by fear, had the start of us, and they were taking two different roads. Following one of them at random, we came up to them, and found, to our excessive disgust, that it consisted of monks, with some women and children; their terror was ludicrous, and lent them wings to keep up with me, that they might not lose my protection. Halfway, after crossing a muddy brook, we met another numerous party of travellers, from the village we were bound to, upon which, as some relatives of the slain man were present, both parties sat down, and had a vigorous cry or howl together, to his memory, after which, and without accident, about noon, we all arrived at the village of Furrus Wagga, where a great wailing was proceeding in the church.

We sat down on the grass, and endeavoured to obtain a jar of beer; but the mourners had consumed all that had been made—a sign that grief here, as well as in other parts of the world that might be mentioned, is a thirsty emotion. Being fast-day, and knowing that the chief would be asleep till four o'clock, we rested for an hour or two, and then proceeded to the camp, placed on a commanding eminence two miles farther, where are the remains of an extensive castle built by the Portuguese for the Emperor Socinios, within the ruined walls of which we found the hut of the Fit-Aurari, surrounded by those of his suite.

After sitting a quarter of an hour, subjected to the usual discipline of a crowd of gazers, I was called by a servant, and found the great man reclining on a skin on the

ground, with two or three favourites and horses; he was a man in the prime of life, and bearing a high military reputation. He rose on my entrance, and, seating me on a couch behind him, immediately requested to see my sword, my pistols, &c.; and after asking a few questions regarding the Ras's movements, ordered dinner, and fed me with great attention. We then proceeded to the ordeal of mead-drinking, and in the evening, after giving us our huts, he ordered us a goat and more mead, to all of which we did the justice of men who have but little idea of the whereabouts, or the extent, of their next meal.

In the morning he gave me a guide to his son-in-law, and having made him a present of some calico, and a box of lucifer-matches, we were about to start, when a novel difficulty arose. Having been devoured all night by ants attracted by the mead, my servants had spread out their clothes in the sun, when a man, evidently mad, and quite naked—who we were told was a great spearman, and whom we had heard recounting his exploits ever since our arrival—came by, and in an innocent, jocose manner, began to try on a pair of trousers; he then added a belt, and snatching up a cloth, rushed into a hut, seized a lance, and shouted that he had spoiled the enemy, and would defend his gains with his life. We were puzzled: it would not do to wound or kill him, and the soldiers, his companions, of course enjoyed the fun amazingly: presently he rushed forth, and amid the shouts of the crowd ran off at full speed, followed by my servants, some half-naked. Being swift of foot, he would, on gaining an advantage, stop and fill his belt with stones, and pelt them as they came up, and then run on. At last, the owner of the trousers, becoming furious, fired a small pistol at him, upon which he fell down and surrendered himself, begging only that he might not be killed, as the bravest were not disgraced by yielding to firearms. The thing was a joke that might have been a serious one, as,

had the pistol-ball struck him, he who fired would have been delivered to the relations of the man, and had he escaped, the blood-feud would have been transferred to myself; and the men of Maycha are proverbial for being ready to kill, without a reason quite as well as with one.

We made a clear start at last, but the delay necessitated a forced march, and we did not arrive at our station till nine o'clock by moonlight, and, though received with hospitality, consequently got no supper till about midnight. On the morrow our host gave us a guide, to take us in safety through the valley of the Ava, a tributary of the Nile. This is always dangerous, as its wild jungle is the resort of all who have quarrelled with the government, as well as of those gentlemen of the road who find the occupation of plundering more agreeable and lively than the more regular one of soldiering; and who, when pushed by troops, retire temporarily into the still more impervious valley of the Nile. Guided, however, by a man born on the soil, you are generally pretty safe, there being a mutual understanding between him and the robbers.

We descended through the usual amount of stones and thorns, and comparatively cultivated land, till, arriving at the cleft, at the bottom of which the river rushes, swift and headlong, over precipices and rocks, I dismounted, and descended a path through trees so thickly matted as to be dark at noonday, and which so excited the admiration of my suite, that they seemed inclined to turn bandits on the spot. The ford was deep, and up to the waist, as the rains in Gojam had not entirely ceased; but the ground at this spot being pretty even, I crossed on horseback, at some risk of an upset from the rapidity of the current. It is a comfort, however, that in all the rivers of Gojam and Damot, with the exception of the Nile itself, crocodiles are scarce, whereas in Teegray they are found in every brook.

On ascending the farther side of the valley to the level

we had left, the heat of the sun became tremendous, and the soil blistered the feet even of my servants, and right glad we were to obtain the shelter of a large tree in the marketplace of the great town of Mota. Our guide informed the governor of our arrival, and then wished us good-bye; but the governor allowed us to pass the day where we were without the slightest notice, being, as it afterwards appeared, at feud with the Fit-Aurari we had left, and moreover an inhospitable churl generally. When it began to grow dark, I congratulated myself on being pretty well fortified internally, and, thinking of Captain Dalgetty, proceeded to take up my quarters in the churchyard (the town having the worst reputation in Abyssinia for night-brawls), when a message from the governor recalled me. Pride and appetite being at variance, the latter carried the day, and I returned; the great man, really afraid of the displeasure of his master, hastened to make excuses for his delay in receiving me; to which I replied that they were quite needless, as I had come to see Dejaj Bourroo, and not him, thinking all the while, in my heart, that the churchyard and a night's fast were well exchanged for a tolerable lodging and good supper. The evening passed in little enlivening hostilities between my servant and the master of the house we were billeted on; the former trying to get as much as possible, and the latter protesting his poverty, and alleging that the miseries of war had fallen on his head, to the destruction of his property, &c. &c.

The churlish governor gave us a guide for another day's journey. Although we proceeded at a rapid pace, and without halt, at nightfall we were yet far from the village we were instructed to sleep at, and a pretty dance we were led in the dark, up hill and down dale, and slipping in the mud; for we had arrived at the belt of high mountains that cross Gojam, where it always rains, and

the fens through which we passed showed the change of climate. Nearly starved, and badly lodged, we passed the night in particular discomfort, and were informed that our next day's journey was not safe, and that we must gird up our loins. This range of dreary fens, where no cultivation is to be found above a certain level, with extensive caverns in almost impregnable situations, and the paths to which are unknown, offers a shelter where the *schifta* (or rebel), setting his chief at defiance, subsists by plunder; in effect, the young gentleman, who was given us as our guide by the chief of the village, after leading us for a few hundred yards, bade us be careful, and then fairly bolted. There was no help for it, and the road was plain, so we dismounted, as the mud rendered it difficult for the horses to keep their footing. The whole side of the mountain we were ascending was intersected by innumerable rills of ice-cold water, pouring through the only grass that grows, called *gwassa*, used for ropes and covering houses, but not eatable for cattle; and as we neared the highest point, the firs ceased, and were replaced by the *gibaroa*, resembling a candle and candlestick, to whose shade the ignorant Abyssinians attribute the vertigo, and oppression of breathing, caused by the sudden change to extreme cold. From this we saw all Gojam, plain on plain, spread out before us, and again the semicircle of the Nile was traceable, with the Galla countries that it separated from the former.

On descending, we saw a body of merchants stopped by some martial-looking character, who, on seeing us, left them and entered into the woods, and we arrived in safety at the town of Nazareta. Three of Bourroo's men, bound to the camp, had accompanied us from Mota, and having informed the Chief Priest that I was the bosom-friend of the Prince, he assigned us quarters as usual.

On the next day we reached Bourroo's camp, his enor-

mous tent being visible for miles. As I had no change of apparel, I was not embarrassed by my toilette, but, riding inadvertently too near the tent of the Prince's wife, was rather rudely advertised of the fact by an eunuch.

Before I had alighted from my horse, or had time to notice more than the silence around the tent, proclaiming the character of this formidable adversary of the Ras, a boy ran out to tell me to enter immediately. Accordingly, followed by one servant, I was ushered into the tent, and, at the other end, saw Bourroo seated on the ground, with but one companion, an old and white-headed man. When within five yards of him, the Agafarea, stretching out his wand, informed me that I must pause; and while Bourroo sat still, and examined me in silence, I will give at once the result of my similar examination of this, the most remarkable man in Abyssinia.

The eye rests on a figure tall and imposing, and upon a countenance the most striking, without exception, I ever beheld—the nose slightly Roman; the mouth, in moments of repose, determined, when smiling, delightful, but in dropping into an expression of displeasure, savage; his hair (though scarce thirty years of age), fallen off from the centre of the forehead to the crown of his head—they say from the use of 'perfumes,'—is on each side luxuriantly black and curling, and gives a fine effect to a high and ample front; and his eyes (though I have seen many more beautiful), the only ones I know that justify the word 'piercing' in its strongest sense, seeming to defy scrutiny, and appearing to observe nothing, while nothing escapes them; their general expression is that of quiet triumph. When enraged, he speaks with extreme slowness and emphasis, but is never loud; his forehead and face become black and clouded, and his eyes, usually so glittering, dull and lowering. I dwell upon his personal traits, from a feeling of regret that my artistic powers

were not sufficient to delineate the only face in Ethiopia that inspired me with that desire.

After a pretty long silence, he remarked to the old man, without addressing me (save by a simple salutation), that this Arab must be a brave soldier, arguing from my position and youth: then, asking me some news of our Queen, and laughing much at my bad Amharic in replying, bade me be seated. After another pause, I thought the most effectual way of breaking the ice would be, in the Abyssinian fashion, by a present; so I directed my servant to bring in the sword I had destined for him, an old cavalry blade, of excellent steel and high polish, in a black leather scabbard, and with an iron hilt. On its being drawn he appeared much pleased, but would not touch the handle, asked me if it was good steel, and was much surprised to see me bend it nearly double. I saw he was in an ecstasy of delight, but he was too much accustomed to self-command to give more symptoms of it; and, thanking me, appeared to forget it, and began to question me how and where the Ras was, my reasons for leaving him, and how I had crossed the Nile, how his people had treated me on the road, &c., till dinner-time arrived.

He ordered all my suite, except two, to be sent to the nearest villages, and billeted on the inhabitants, which, though it did not at all suit me, I silently acceded to at the time, and I was served separately with food. Bourroo remarked, after a time, that I was a poor eater; but on the appearance of the mead, on the other hand, he said that I drank like a man—which, being particularly thirsty, I believe I did, and further requested him to order me a jar at my own lodging for the night. This would be a strange solecism in Europe, but he laughed mightily, and sent it, to the joy of my domestics. He gave me two Baldarabbas —the Ajaz to feed and lodge me, and the Agafarea to admit me or any messenger, and to call me when wanted,

giving them the strictest orders to attend to me well, by all which I knew that the sword was highly esteemed.

The next morning, before I was well awake, I was called to the tent (about 70 feet long), and found the sword occupying all hands. Bourroo, having conceived that it could not possibly be well mounted without my superintendence, refreshed me with a bottle of wine, and we set to. His cleverest workman had lighted his fire, and brought his bellows, and we soon filed away the old handle, and dismounting the best rhinoceros-horn to be found in the camp, it was in its place in five minutes; after which, having had it (the new handle) carefully scraped and lightly oiled, he condescended to take the weapon in his hand, and feel how it would suit. By the morrow, he had the best sheath-maker in the country brought from a long distance, and had a sheath made of enormous length, threatening to behead the man if he made another like it; and in a week, he ordered his horse, and showed the sword to the admiring camp, in a game at *gooks*.

I took the first opportunity of informing him that I was neither an Arab nor a Turk, upon which he apologised for his ignorance, and begged to know what he should call me. On telling him my name, he said, more from affectation than difficulty, it was an impossibility to pronounce it, whereupon we settled that I should be the 'Inglese.' I also got all my servants put on allowance at the camp with me, and built myself a domicile, slaughtered several bullocks, sheep, and goats, grew rapidly stout, and, with upstart pride, looked scornfully on my one dollar, till reminded by the increasing raggedness of my costume, which Bourroo evidently thought was of purpose, that it might still be useful to me; so I hoarded it, doing my best with needle and thread, and the light heart and thin breeches of the Irish poet-philosopher. There was

abundance of game immediately round the camp, which was a preserve of the Prince, and my servant, ignorantly wandering in that direction, soon shot a fine fat pig. This being reported, I was told to keep them from shooting there in future; the penalty, had anyone else so transgressed, would have been amputation.

A slight sketch of Bourroo's career may not be uninteresting. His father Goscho, after various unequal fortunes, brought his son, then quite a young man, with him to the court of Ras Ali; the youth, from a conscious feeling that if he showed the superiority of his talents he should be considered too dangerous, and liable even to be deprived of his liberty, dressed himself purposely like a sloven, and affected the character of an imbecile so well, that none called him other than "the fool.' From his high family, and the interest of the Queen, whom he had found means to make his friend, the Ras gave him his sister in marriage, and the government and negarete of Nephsee. No sooner was this done than Bourroo Goscho began to throw off the mask, and the Ras to grow jealous proportionally; till one day, in playing at *gooks*, he had the audacity to throw a stick at the Ras, in return for one that had struck him. The Ras, already enraged by the refusal of Bourroo to give him the horse Dampto, which he was then riding, drew his sword; the latter drew his, and assumed an attitude of defiance, when others interfered, and they were separated. Bourroo, who was too powerful and had too many secret friends to be attacked openly, was invited to supper, as usual. Sending word that he was sick, at midnight he sent off his wife by one road, and taking another himself, they were soon safe in the strong territory of Nephsee; and from that time he has never met the Ras.

The Ras in a short time followed him. Bourroo crossed into the Galla country, and though in great danger from

the Gallas, succeeded by finesse in existing there, till the departure of the Ras enabled him to return. The latter, no doubt through the influence of his favourites and the Queen (all Bourroo's secret friends), not only pardoned him, but gave him the fine country of Dembea, with a view, however, of separating him from Gojam. Again changing his mind, the Ras issued orders to seize Bourroo, when the latter, timely warned, escaped to Gojam, declared himself independent, and obtained possession by bribery of his father's two mountain strongholds; and his fame attracting a large force, joined to his family influence in Gojam, he was enabled to beat all opposed to him. The Ras would yearly take the field in person, when Bourroo would quickly retire to his mountain; on the departure of the Ras, issuing forth, he invariably conquered all the chiefs of the latter, and grew more and more powerful, until at last, in one fortunate victory, he took prisoners seven great chiefs (including his father and the Ras's brother), obtained some 2,000 guns, and at once became master of all the country bounded by the Nile.

His father then joined him, and the Ras, as usual, making an incursion into Gojam, Bourroo passed by another road into Begemder, when, ravaging the whole country, he joined Oobeay, as previously arranged between them, in great force, close to the Ras's camp of Devra Tabor. The Ras's wife had taken shelter in the sacred city of Mahadera Mariam, when Oobeay, her father—seeing, with his usual craftiness, how beneficial it would be to himself to put the Ras at deadly variance with Bourroo—demanded her of the priesthood, threatening otherwise to plunder the town. She was given up, and Oobeay, declaring that he divorced her from the Ras, the same day gave her in marriage to Bourroo. The latter, with the unscrupulous morality of the country, did not allow his marriage with the Ras's sister to prevent his profiting by the occasion, especially as the

lady in question was reputed the most beautiful in Abyssinia, and as it would encourage all those who had left the Ras to join him. This news recalled the Ras in haste from Gojam, and his forces having joined him from every quarter, the whole of Abyssinia met at the battle of Devra Tabor, the day after the Ras's arrival. The Aboona, declaring the Ras a Mussulman, had joined and blessed the standard of Oobeay.

The Ras's force consisted almost entirely of cavalry; but the numerous guns of his opponents gave them the advantage, and early in the day victory declared itself for Oobeay. The Ras fled, and all was utter rout, when an unexpected event altered affairs. Bourroo, without apparent reason, suddenly quitted the field, and thereby left the flank of Oobeay entirely open; the soldiers of the latter were already far in pursuit, and he was tranquilly sitting in the midst of a few followers, when, to his astonishment, an adherent of the Ras galloped up from the quarter where he had supposed Bourroo to be victorious like himself. The other, a brave soldier, who had ridden up for the purpose of surrendering himself, when he saw the hesitation and alarm of Oobeay, seized him instead; and the report being spread, all who had been taken prisoners retook their captors, and the victory was finally with the Ras, who also had disappeared with all his Gallas. For seven days did the throne thus remain vacant, after which the Ras reappeared and took possession.

Bourroo, it appears, either only wished to read the Ras a lesson, and show him the character of the opponent he had to deal with, having in reality a much greater dread of Oobeay; or had heard, it is said, that the latter had determined to chain him, and declare himself Ras. However that may be, he reached Maycha, where his famous horse Dampto died of his wounds, and was buried with military honours. The Ras, after a time, made peace with

Oobeay and unchained him, retook his wife—who had been left on the field by Bourroo, and was found nearly naked amongst the multitude of prisoners—and began his usual incursions into Gojam. Bourroo, persevering in his old policy, successively vanquished all his chiefs. The last was the Ras's cousin, Dejaj Merso—the dread of Oobeay, of the Ras, and of all Abyssinia. On the other hand, Dejaj Goscho, the father of Bourroo, was taken prisoner by the Queen; and thus Bourroo, at the time of my arrival, was in sole possession of all his territories, Merso in chains, and the country in daily expectation of the usual campaign of the Ras.

The wonderful fertility of Gojam has alone enabled it to support these continual wars, in which the country is, of necessity, the prey of both parties, as I shall presently show. The Ras, indeed, threatens to convert it into a desert, while Bourroo boasts that the wild deer in that desert shall be his food. The Ras has, in fact, given up to slaughter several even of the sacred cities; and the rest of the country has to furnish food, clothing, and all necessaries for his numerous force, which they themselves compare to locusts. It is owing to the high influence of Bourroo, alone, that the Ras is prevented from governing the whole country as far as Shoa. All rebellions in Aijjo, and elsewhere, are formed through his schemes, and in reliance on the distractions he causes to the Ras. Oobeay, knowing that the Ras cannot quit Begemder to make war on him from the same cause, assumes a haughty position, which he could not otherwise do; and the Wallo Gallas pray for the long continuance of Bourroo's fortune, as, should he fall, nothing but submission and tribute could save them from devastation by the Ras, who might then attack them on three sides at once.

CHAPTER XI.

A SOCIAL PARTY—DEJAJ MERSO—IMMER SAHALO—THE GAME OF GOOKS—A BANQUET—BOURROO IN A BAD TEMPER—CUSTOM ON THE SLAYING OF AN ELEPHANT—BOURROO CAMPAIGNS—GALLA TRIBUTE—PLUNDER OF REBEL COUNTRY—ATTEMPT TO LEAVE—OBLIGED TO REMAIN—MORE MARCHING—SCARCITY IN THE CAMP.

One night I was called after dark, and found Bourroo drinking with about a dozen of his great chiefs, who had just arrived, and Dejaj Merso, his prisoner, who had been brought from the mountains. This was an Abyssinian *ruse*, as, from the difficulty of obtaining accurate information, it would be sure to cause a report in Begemder that Merso was about to join Bourroo on being set at liberty, which would certainly have the effect of delaying the campaign of the Ras. In this department of Ethiopian diplomacy Bourroo especially shines, and a most important one it is.

Merso, a young man of effeminate beauty of feature, was treated with the attention his rank claimed: he was chained by the right arm to the left of a trusty servant, by a chain of a yard long, attached to a ring round the wrist of each; and though slightly downcast, he was too much accustomed to reverses of fortune, to feel much real pain. By his side was a boisterous man, whose merriment drowned every other sound, and whom I soon discovered to be Immer Sahalo, the greatest gourmand and the ugliest man in the country, and, let me add, one of the cleverest. I could see very little, as the lights of the royal tent consisted of two very dingy

wax-candles, about equal to the worst dips of Europe, each held by a ragged boy—at times approaching the royal nose, at others retreating, in order that the royal liquor might be poured out with better aim from the jar. The attendants regulate their drinking by that of their master; so that by the time he is entirely drunk they might be three parts so, or thereabouts; and this being a social little party, even the human candlesticks were not omitted. Immer Sahalo paid me great attention; he asked me so many questions that I could not answer any of them, and without waiting for reply went on talking vociferously to everyone. So, seizing an opportunity, I slipped out without ceremony, Dejaj Merso having previously taken the occasion to beg a turban of me.

The next morning Bourroo, being in spirits, was out early on horseback, and after shouting for about half an hour, rode up to the multitude that had hitherto been kept back. He was mounted on his favourite horse, a magnificent cream, and arriving at the ground for *gooks*, changed it for an iron-grey, that he had obtained the day before from Immer Sahalo, and again, in the course of the play, for a dark bay.

The *gooks* is a fine animated game, far more so than the *jereed* of the East, which indeed has been adopted by the Turks from their Galla slaves, being an exact imitation of their battles, and, from the large and heavy sticks frequently used, attended with risk, and not unfrequently with loss of life. Horsemen and gunners divide themselves into two parties; and armed with their shields, and one or two stout bamboos for throwing, they keep their horses in constant motion, as in battle, producing a curious effect to those accustomed to European regularity. The Galla horse are formidable from this peculiarity, that without a leader, every man mounted on

a firstrate horse, they gallop about the plain at full speed without a moment's pause—some stretching to the right or left, making feints, some galloping to and fro, some apparently in full flight, all shouting their war-cries, when in an instant you see all these united in one body, rushing at the same speed on some point, and suddenly again scattered and in flight.

The Abyssinian game of *gooks* is, however, somewhat different; they tramp quietly up and down, instead of always riding at speed, and keep more united. It is a fixed rule, in both the real and the false encounter, that when the one party lash the horses forward, the other should fly a certain distance, and on these turning, that the others should fly in their turn, guarding their rear with their shields. The gunners fire with powder at the advancing horsemen, and then run like devils; while the servants on foot vie with each other in picking up the fallen *zengs* for their different masters. No one, of course, throws at the chief, and the shouting of their battle-cry is incessant. With their scarlet saddle-cloths and glittering *benaicka* flashing in the sun, and long sheepskins on their shoulders, the hair streaming as they gallop, they present a picturesque and wild appearance.* I may add that at *gooks* they are all intrepid, but in battle they take more care of themselves.

The game finished, the great man generally goes off at a gallop to his tent, followed by the rest, and they separate to their different encampments. If a great gala-day, they prepare for *adirash*, or feasting, which takes place in the following fashion. Bourroo's tent is ample, and on entering, the table is found laid with some thousands of the flat 'breads' of the country, made of *teph* and other corn. The higher chiefs are seated on the ground near the Prince—he himself on an *alga*, or couch, with his sword girded; his

shield-bearer, with his shield (the most gorgeous in Abyssinia) and two spears, stands behind him, as do also a stalwart black slave, with five or six boys, sons of the nobility, with silver ornaments round their necks—generally handsome lads; two young men, one at the head of his couch, fanning off the flies, one receiving his bottle and speaking for him, when he does not raise his voice; and two or three officers, with wands, marshalling all that are called to their places. Then the *tejj*, ranged in large jars, held by women, who pour it out; the *Asalafic*, and two or three assistants, with some hundreds of large tumblers and buffalo-horn cups for the soldiers, and bottles for the gentlemen; the women of the cooking department, each holding her dish, ready to deposit it; and the cows, perhaps thirty or forty, are thrown down, slaughtered, and within three minutes the choice morsels of raw meat, of the fattest, are brought in, palpitating, for the chief and those of high rank. Knives are handed round to all, and each cuts himself a large piece from the part offered to him by the boy who hands it round; bread is brought to all these in baskets of grass-work, out of which they help themselves according to their rank. Roast meat is then brought in, and when all are satisfied, or nearly so, mead is handed round, and the better class of domestics are admitted to commence their inroads on the mountain of bread; this is the signal for all the soldiers who have the privilege (generally gunners or men of distinguished courage), to crowd in and station themselves as near as possible to the jars of *tejj*. Here a constant fire of wit, repartee, and broad joking—that is as natural to an Abyssinian as persiflage to a Frenchman, or grumbling to an Englishman—is carried on with more or less vigour, according to the humour the great man assumes; party after party succeeds, making attacks upon the table, as though it had been their first meal for a fortnight; raw

meat is handed about to all; *shotels* and swords are drawn, as nobody gives them knives, and the wonder is the dexterity with which they avoid amputating their own noses. Meanwhile the mead is not idle; a buffoon, or rather a fool, enters and makes the chief laugh; Asmarees at the farther end, with their one-stringed fiddles, begin their praises of the entertainer; outside, the *negarete* and *umbilta* are heard through the increasing din; and presently, as all get warmed, horsemen, dressed in the most splendid array, are seen galloping up to the tent, shouting their war-cry, and brandishing their spears.

The tent is then thrown open, and some warrior, galloping in, throws his spear into the ground before the chief, draws his sword, and begins his *doomfata*, wheeling his horse to and fro, or galloping out and returning at intervals of the recital, with appeals to his comrades for his truth, and boasts of what he will do, interspersed perhaps with a wittily-conveyed request or two, and then making his bow retires; when another rushes in and performs the same feat, varied sometimes by spearmen, sometimes by gunners, who discharge their guns on entering. All this the chief, and indeed everybody else, must sit out. The drinking gets furious, and the *adirash* is considered 'the thing' in proportion to the quantity of *tejj* consumed. The drunken soldiers are carried off by their comrades who can stand, and afford amusement to the crowd of less fortunate warriors, who, seated outside, criticise the proceedings; and at last the chiefs stagger out with a more imposing gravity, and with the aid of a friendly arm. If we consider what would be likely to take place were a similar license accorded to a number of armed Europeans, it says much for either the natural good temper of the Abyssinian, or the influence of his chief, that scarcely ever does a serious quarrel occur on these occasions.

I went in one morning early to Bourroo; it was fast-day, and I had the felicity of seeing him in one of his black moods, and very unpleasant they are. The first thing I heard was the *giraffe* (not the cameleopard, but a very disagreeable ox-whip, with a short handle and long lash, that brings away the flesh at each stroke), cracking like a pistol on the backs of some offenders. Presently a young boy was brought in, who, it appeared, had belonged to some portion of the household, and had run away. Bourroo gave one of his disagreeable smiles, that were rather more dreaded than a frown, and ordered him forty lashes, with strict orders that they should be well laid on, counting them himself with a look of devilish glee, and at the same time piously numbering his beads. When finished, the lad was brought in shivering, and his back not appearing sufficiently scored, after a little jesting, he was ordered ten more lashes; after which a little wretch of a pet boy (my particular abhorrence)—the model of a black Cupid, and of vice and cruelty enough to make a respectable Nero—hounded on by his master, drove the poor lad out of the tent, with blows as energetic as his small fists could give.

Presently a priest came in to the *adewairi*, or cleared space, and commenced cursing and excommunicating Bourroo, for something that I could not clearly make out. He was ordered in, and requested, nay entreated, to remove the excommunication, but was obstinate. Bourroo, who was evidently in no playful humour, at last grew impatient, and ordered him the lash *ad libitum* till he should consent; he was flogged till he could scarcely articulate, but when he did so it was to add to the curse. Fearful that he should die, in which case his Satanic majesty would certainly claim the Prince's soul in his turn, the latter resorted to an expedient somewhat

characteristic. Another priest, of great reputed sanctity, who had visited Jerusalem, was called in, and being informed how the case stood, excommunicated his brother-priest, till he should remove the curse from Bourroo; to which the other acceded, glad perhaps of an excuse to save his pride, and his back at the same time. He was led away by some friends, and, as no one pitied him, he had better have saved himself the trouble and remained at home. This settled, Bourroo ordered the flogger to be severely thrashed with a bamboo, for not having punished the priest with sufficient severity.

I returned to my breakfast, but the crack of the whip reached me at intervals all through the day; and, indeed, in Bourroo's camp the sound seldom ceased, as he is very severe, except when he receives a new horse, or some good news, or on '*Medhansaltun*,' a day in the month considered the peculiar holy day of the Church, when he never punishes.

During our stay here, the women of the camp were thrown into an ecstasy of delight by the arrival of a Fit-Aurari bearing the tusks of an elephant that he had killed. The death of a Galla, or an elephant, justifies a week's song and merrymaking, and the bearers of the *tejj*, with the cooking department (consisting of, perhaps, 150 females), thereby obtain no small profit as well as pleasure; the slayer, as well as all the other men of rank in the camp, bestow on them bullocks, dollars, &c., under pain of a fearful castigation in their songs, and consequently becoming a laughingstock throughout the country. Songs, adapted always to passing events, and often witty and apt, are the 'Charivari' of the Abyssinian, and dreaded as much as the lash of the chiefs. The singing for the elephant is carried on night and day by the women, while the men look on, and jokes are the order of the day. The accompaniment is a *tom-tom*, the universal

plague, let the traveller be in India, Arabia, Ethiopia, or the West Indies. The song is kept up by one—the others, in a circle round, carrying on the quickly-repeated chorus, which is rather longer than the song; and evidently the cream of the thing, together with the clapping of hands and an occasional shrill tremulous cry, that gives a pleasing variety to the whole: all this is accompanied by a swaying of the loins, and a peculiar motion, of which the art consists in jerking the neck without moving the head, much applauded among the aborigines, but which would have a thrilling effect upon the polished nerves of an European spectator. Nevertheless, to the mind not too deeply immersed in the ocean of conventional and civilised forms, there is always something to interest, nay to please, in the rudest efforts of more natural races, even though they commit the iniquity of cultivating their hair with butter instead of bear's-grease, and eat raw beef in place of raw oysters. The cries are simple, but agreeable; the time and tune are well preserved, and you hear occasionally a voice that, in its uncultivated beauty, might excite the envy of a Grisi.

I had just finished a magnificent mansion of sticks and straw, sufficient, in my opinion, for myself and two horses (as to leave Bourroo with only one dollar was out of the question) when, lo the instability of human affairs! the order was given for marching the next day —where, it was not stated.

The order of march was as follows:—At midnight the wife of Bourroo started, under a strong escort, that no vulgar eye might gaze even on her cloth, and her tent was the signal for all to arrange themselves by, on arrival; before daylight the Fit-Auraris take their departure, each beating his *negarete*; then Bourroo, and, after all stragglers have left the camp, the *Dejin*, or rearguard. The soldiery, the women, the boys, and the innumerable

beasts of burden, start as they please, and follow on the road, which cannot be mistaken, as, the first arriving before the last leaves, the line of people, from the old camp to the new one, is unbroken. I was among the foremost, and, stopping a few minutes by a pretty streamlet on the road, my eye caught the flashing of the accoutrements of five or six hundred horse, glittering in the morning sun; while the deep notes of the *negarete* came sweeping down the breeze, and the *umbilta*, with its sweet waltz airs, faint as a dream, set me musing on Milton's sound of 'flutes and soft recorders,' breathing heroic passion, till the tramp of the horses' feet, the loud clashing of the trappings of the mules, and the startling beat of the approaching drums, roused me to join the calvacade round the Prince. He now came up, dressed in the height of fashion, with silk pantaloons, an immense turban on his head, and a tooth-brush of a yard long in his mouth; he was mounted on a beautiful mule, that, apparently walking slowly, caused a pace nearly approaching a run in all the rest; another mule was before him, four favourite horses immediately behind, high-fed, and kicking at all who approached them; and around him men of rank, and powerful chiefs or favourites—some on mules handsomely caparisoned, with their horses led; some on horseback, with their shield-bearers mounted on their mules, and most with ornamented shields. The climate was delicious—the finest season of the year, and the best time of the day; just as the hoarfrost melted off the grass, when the heavy dew yet glittered here and there.

On passing a village, the inhabitants screamed a welcome and a blessing—as they would do, probably, to the Ras a few minutes afterwards; and the multitude of wayfarers dividing right and left, we soon reached the camp, where some of those already arrived were busy

setting up their masters' tents, and some in bringing wood and grass for their huts. The place of each is well known, as the tent of each chief is pitched exactly with reference to that of Bourroo, and the little huts of all his followers in a circle round it. Pegs for the beasts are driven into the ground, wood is collected for the fire, and in a few hours the new camp is as bustling as the old one. The women and boys carry all the earthen vessels, for cooking and bread-baking, gourds for water, and grindstones; and in a couple of hours the soldier stretches himself on a skin in his small *gojo* (hut), as though it were a palace, and leaves the rest to his helpmate, who, with all her zeal and activity, can only manage to provide him with one meal a day on the march.

Immediately after arrival, I breakfasted with the Prince, with the usual accompaniments of raw bullock and mead, and then found that my small camp of three *gojos* was completed. Selecting the longest one, by a judicious arrangement of my legs out of the door, and taking advantage of a small recess at one end (formed by a crooked stick), of the size of my head, whereon to bestow that appendage, I slept as comfortably as the cold and the circumstances would permit. Our camp was in the plain, where, the hoarfrost lying on the ground, the cold to the naked feet, a little before sunrise, is so intense as to be extremely painful.

On arising we made a bonfire of our little camp, and marched on in the same manner as the previous day. Our road had been southerly, and we now encamped near the Valley of the Nile, where it separates Gojam from the country of Kootlai. Bourroo sent messages to the Galla chiefs, and in a week they brought a tribute of thirty horses, receiving in return a scarlet shirt. At each new camp the *negarete* is beaten every evening, soon

after dark, and has a fine effect. Here the great tent was erected, signifying that we should stay some time. In effect, all Bourroo's chiefs began to join him here with their forces, and the camp at nightfall resounded with the *negaretes*, *umbiltas*, and *malakuts*—a species of trombone, loud and disagreeable.

At the Feast of St. John the Baptist there was a great gathering or review of all the forces, a grand game of *gooks*, and then an *adirash* that lasted till after dark, and in which the universal camp was intoxicated. Tired of the scene, I pleaded sickness, and had everything provided for me in my *gojo*, catching glimpses from time to time of ardent warriors careering past to make their *doomfata*, and receiving bulletins from my domestics, who strove among the crowd for a share of the good things.

One evening I was agreeably surprised by the arrival of a servant from Gondar: he was under the surveillance of Bourroo's people, having been taken by my friend of Mota as a spy of the Ras, and sent to the camp; he gave me letters he had brought, and told me he had also ten dollars, but that they had been taken from him, and were to be given to Bourroo. In the morning, at dawn, I was called, and Bourroo asked if he was my servant. I said, 'Yes.' 'Has he brought moneys for you?'—'Yes, ten dollars;' on which he handed them to me, and, being new dollars, asked if they had been made that week. Immer Sahalo, who was there, treated me with studied indifference, which I afterwards found out was occasioned by jealousy, on hearing of my visit to Toko Brillay, his cousin and bitterest enemy. Asking if my servant was to return, on my replying in the affirmative, he directed the same men that had brought him to take him back without an hour's delay, to treat him well, and to tell his master to recross him instantly. It was evident he

did not yet trust me. I should have wished to have kept the man a fortnight, but I thought silent acquiescence was the best policy; so he went, and I forthwith invested my capital, at the nearest market of Basso, in the purchase of clothes for myself and domestics; my own were worn out, and they possessed but one ragged cloth among three to sleep under, small sheepskins only over their shoulders, and trousers that would have raised a blush on the cheek of Billingsgate. Warned by experience, I bought a thick and strong article, and, for the first time for some weeks, had a warm and comfortable night's rest. I made peace with Immer Sahalo by the present of a small percussion-pistol with a spring-bayonet, and from that time we were bosom-friends.

It now became known to the camp (after divers reports of a Galla campaign, and so forth), by the sudden imprisonment of a man in the camp of the name of Tasfai Gwonloo, that his brother Natcho Gwonloo had declared for the Ras in the neighbourhood of Dembitcha, and that it was against him that the present movements were directed. Another very short day's march took us to Yawish, a large *geddam*, at the foot of which we encamped. There was evidently something wrong—no breakfast; and presently the priests of the town appeared bearing the Fitha Negust, a code of laws for consultation, which in most cases politely says, 'Let it be as the king wills,' or is made to say so. A prisoner was then brought forward, whom we recognised as having been a favourite at Bourroo's table; and on enquiring from our excellent friends and gossips, the Tejj Asalafic and Deputy Ajaz, we learnt that he had been discovered to be a spy of the Ras, who had passed the whole of the rainy season with Bourroo, and had during the last week, by promises in his master's name, induced the desertion of a follower of

Bourroo—which had been the means of his discovery,—and that, having confessed his treachery, the Fitha Negust was to pronounce his punishment. Now this said sacred and revered book, being written in an unknown antiquity, for the guidance of the Emperors, the sons of Solomon, and the twelve *Licks* or judges of the empire, and the Ras being no more than a fortunate soldier—who had no right, by the rules of that very Fitha Negust, to inflict punishments, that belonging to the said judges and the Emperor only—and Bourroo being only a rebel, it would appear that they might very well dispense with the idle ceremony of consulting the said code; inasmuch as they have dispensed with the ceremony of acknowledging its legal fountain-head, the Emperor, whom if they were to pitch into the Lake Tsana, with the code round his neck, nobody would miss either the one or the other. However, on the present occasion, Bourroo being adorned, by the conciliating law, with the title of king, it was summarily stated that 'a traitor to the king should be flogged, and then cut'—the extent of the sentence being left entirely to the royal clemency or justice. The Fitha Negust then retired, and three stout operators being called in, the unfortunate youth received fifty very sufficient strokes from each, in sight of the chief; after which he was removed to a short distance, and his two ears cut off with a razor, the mildest amputation (indeed, Bourroo was much lauded on this occasion for moderation), and left to crawl away as he best could, his clothes becoming the property of the executioners of the sentence.

The next march took us within one day's journey of the *schifta* or rebel country. The plains of Gojam, slightly undulating, and destitute of trees, and with only clumps of low thorny bushes, present but few features of beauty to the eye; though the salubrity of the climate, the

fertility of the soil, and the unequalled pasturage for cattle, of which thousands are grazing in every direction, more than compensate for that. A peculiarity in the country renders it very awkward for those unaccustomed to the ground, in case of a defeat, and the Ras's troops, being strangers, suffer in consequence. Every little brook, be it almost an imperceptible ditch, is rendered impassable, for miles, by bogs on each side of it, except by the paths, that are scarcely visible in the high grass. Even with Bourroo, whose people were all of the country, the whole camp were obliged one day to retrace their steps for two or three hours' march, having taken the wrong road, and being stopped by one of these marshes, while the tent of the chief was visible, about half a mile on the other side of it.

Here we halted for two days, and a proclamation was issued, by beat of drum, stating that to be the period given to the inhabitants of the offending district to remove their wives and children. On the second morning he had two of his servants flogged—one a pretty young handmaiden of his wife, and the other a youth, a great favourite, one of whose eyes Bourroo had formerly struck out by accident while playing at *gooks*. It was said that he was with difficulty persuaded, on this occasion, not to extinguish the other eye; as it was, he ordered his head to be shaved dry, with a blunt sword, and dismissed him, taking away all his property.

A few hours took us to the *schifta's* territory, passing in sight of Dembitcha, the southern border of the district of Damot; we found the inhabitants had fled, with their chief, to the Valley of the Nile, which we could see, together with the opposite country of the Amoro Gallas, where Bourroo dared not descend. The limits of plunder were defined, and all were off at discretion—horse, foot, and mules covering the plain in every direction. The

long tent was pitched, but the corn having been removed, little was brought to the camp; my servants (I being instructed that they must do as the rest) brought in about a week's supply, and a bag of tobacco, that was very acceptable.

I now formed the resolution of leaving Bourroo, and entering Dembitcha, demanding of him sufficient corn to sustain me there till I received a supply of money; as I knew that, if the Ras once crossed the Nile before we were separated, I should be under the inevitable and disagreeable necessity of perching myself in his mountain stronghold for an indefinite period—a mode of life by no means to my taste, particularly as provisions are apt to run short. On making my request, he asked me to wait till we returned to our former camp; deeming this to be a *ruse*, to prevent my leaving him, I pressed the matter, and he consented. The next day, he made me a present of a beautiful young horse, the envy of his chiefs, many of whom offered to purchase it from me. It was brought to Bourroo by his great favourite, Abfa Malafra, the Dejajmatch of Damot, who joined him here with all his forces, as did also the Dejajmatch of the rich and fertile province of the Agows, and another Fit-Aurari. For these a great *adirash* was held, they all bringing the customary twenty or thirty madagas of mead, &c. The soldiers were served in madagas to save time, say five gallons each jar.

The corn that was plundered being soon finished, and the newcomers, who had expected their share, becoming clamorous for bread, we started in ten days by the same road we had come. At daylight I went to Bourroo, who was reading outside the tent; and a boy being sent to ask my wants, I requested an escort to Dembitcha, as had been promised. Bourroo replied that I must accompany him to our old camp, where he would give me a beautiful

mule, and other presents. I said it was impossible; and receiving no answer to this, when everybody had started except the Dejin, I tranquilly took the road to Dembitcha: Bourroo, however, was as sharp as myself, and having seen him whisper to Dejaj Abfa, who was Dejin or rearguard, I had some suspicions that the day would be a stormy one.

Scarcely had I gone a hundred yards, when a band of soldiers came running at speed, and ordered me to stop. I obeyed: but as the brandishing of lances and handling of our horses' bridles became rather insolent, the aforesaid soldiers being hungry and therefore ferocious, my servants began to get rather ill-tempered also; and as there was every demonstration of a serious row, I dismounted, and, asking where their chief was, walked towards the tent. On arriving there I called my Baldarabba or speaker, who introduced me, when Dejaj Abfa was taking leave of Amoro Hailo, the Agow chief, and numerous other grandees. They saluted me, but, sooth to say, I am afraid I did not behave with distinguished politeness, for, plunging *in medias res*, I informed them of my stoppage, my consequent indignation, the unwarrantable liberty of attempting to control a stranger like myself, and my determination not to return to Bourroo, whose horse I stated (and truly) I had left at liberty, to go back to his donor if he liked, making him also a present of my saddle which was on him—all in a breath, in very bad Amharic, but with a very good will.

At this burst the whole assemblage seemed amazed, as well they might be; and after a short consultation, Dejaj Abfa said that, at the risk of Bourroo's displeasure, he took upon himself to set me at liberty to go where I pleased; on which I bowed, and in a minute my Baldarabba followed me, with a message from the Dejajmatch, begging me, as an act of friendship to himself, to accom-

pany him as far as that day's journey—making himself responsible for my subsequent departure, and offering me his camp, and all that was necessary for myself and domestics, if I disliked that of Bourroo.

After some discussion I acquiesced, and on returning to my people and the soldiers, we found the dispute running high between them: just as we turned away, thinking all was settled, and that they would follow us, the sound of frantic war-cries, and the thud of lances striking shields, reached us. Turning round, I saw that a regular skirmish had begun; but as the odds were rather against them in a strange camp, my servants contented themselves with guarding the thrusts aimed at them, and performing vigorous *doomfatas*. I dismounted, but remained tranquil, and cautioned my gunner not to fire, unless he saw life taken, as shields could be mended. Eventually my Baldarabba, with much difficulty, quelled the row, fortunately, before any but a slight flesh-wound or two had occurred, as, had a man fallen, nothing could have saved the whole of us. The Damot soldiers are notorious for their reckless disregard of life, and had been fasting for nearly two days; and I maintain from experience that, however philosophers may talk of intellect, or mind, or anything else, there was some practical wisdom in those who placed the seat of the soul in the stomach.

I accompanied Dejaj Abfa to the camp, where I left him, and walked into the tent of Immer Sahalo, where I saw, as usual with that *bon-vivant*, a tolerable feast was in progress—in fact, according to my theory, I was in the nick of time. Immer Sahalo was half-drunk and entirely happy, and having heard my wrongs, told me to remain with him, and sent a messenger to Bourroo, telling him that I was under his protection. That chief sent three servants, consecutively, to beg me to return, when we should

arrange all, and to state that their master had refused to eat till he saw me. Remaining firm, I stayed till the evening where I was, and then returned to my usual camp with Bourroo, considering that, as he had consented to my residence with Immer Sahalo, I had better take leave of him on good terms.

I did not see him for two days, during which we made another march, and were joined by more forces; and the nightly cry of *Esgibo* became stunning, making known very significantly that the camp was hungry. Here Bourroo killed an ox, the pride of the country; it certainly was enormous, and extremely fat, and Bourroo laughed, in the pride of his heart, when calling for the piece of meat that is taken off the ribs from shoulder to hip. Dreadful was the change when it was brought by the butcher, curtailed of its fair proportions. Bourroo's mouth fell, he dropped his knife, and refused to eat; but his knees being instantly seized by Immer Sahalo and Dejaj Abfa, to implore a remission of the sentence they foresaw, they succeeded in saving the trembling official. The feast was soon at an end, and everyone speedily dismissed—not, however, before Immer Sahalo had obtained permission for my residence in his camp till my final departure. When I removed that afternoon, Bourroo renewed his promise of a mule.

We made a forced march the next day, to nearly the same place that we encamped at on the Feast of St. John the Baptist, but close to the Valley of the Nile, as usual said to be for a Galla campaign. As I was now with the Fit-Aurari, we started at cockcrow, and pretty cold we found it; and our camp being the foremost, we looked immediately over the deep valley of this great river. Here it separates Abyssinia from a great nation speaking a different language, with a soil yet more fertile, and whose vigorous frames, and manly and

warlike habits, require but the knowledge of firearms, and the guidance of some chief of skill and intellect, to pour their innumerable horse over the enfeebled and comparatively enervated Christians of Ethiopia. Of this and other matters relating to the Gallas, I will speak hereafter.

CHAPTER XII.

PLUNDERING —A VICIOUS HORSE—THE RAINS IN GOJAM — JUNGLE TRAVELLING — QUIT BOURROO —DEVRA WERK—KERANION—HOSPITALITY AND CURIOSITY—RECROSS THE AVA—A SUPPER—RETURN OF FEVER—BOURROO'S FIT-AURARI—SCARCITY OF FOOD—ARRRIVE AT BAHARDAR.

SCARCELY had we encamped, when the drum was beaten, and the order was given to plunder the valley beneath us. This was only from want of corn, there being no quarrel, the head-man, in fact, being in the camp, totally unsuspecting, and receiving only half an hour's warning from Bourroo to remove his family to a place of safety. That there might be no opposition, Bourroo had previously sent away nearly all the male inhabitants of the valley—who are a turbulent race—to carry corn, honey, &c. to his mountain stronghold; as it was, however, two or three soldiers were killed. The stream of plunderers was unbroken for three days; and such was the fertility of the land, that, though the tract was but a few miles in extent each way, the corn brought was calculated to be a sufficient provision for six months, and four times as much had been burnt in firing the houses. The cry of hunger was changed for songs and merriment, and the thoughtless soldiery, as usual, began to eat as much as they could manage, caring little when it might be finished. A shock of an earthquake, however (the only one I experienced in Abyssinia), one day set them crying again for half an hour, this time, to a Greater than Bourroo, as they were persuaded that the end of the world was at hand.

Another of my servants had arrived from Gondar with supplies, so that I was now independent. The day we encamped here, Bourroo had galloped up, with a number of followers, to the tent of Immer Sahalo, whom he looked upon as a father. We had just breakfasted, and Bourroo, I fancy, had also stopped at his tent to refresh himself—as he was very lively, riding his horse into the tent, to the imminent risk of divers guns, bottles, and tent-poles. On seeing me, he asked me if I found myself in better quarters. I said 'Yes,' but that I found it very inconvenient to be always on horseback, and that his mule appeared to be a long time forthcoming. I had begun to discover that modesty was by no means the road to preferment among my black friends, more than among my white. He laughed, and said, 'In a day or two;' after which, and the usual feasting, we were all turned out for a consultation to take place. That evening the valley was plundered.

One day, after breakfasting with Immer Sahalo, we were disturbed by a man loudly complaining that some one in our camp, riding an unsaddled horse, had killed his wife; and on looking out of the tent, I was surprised to see that the said horse (which the man had captured) was the one that Bourroo had given to me. I informed Immer Sahalo, who ordered him to look for the owner, and that then he would do him justice. I went out, and, telling the man that the horse was mine, he delivered him up to me, professing his willingness to be judged by me. It appeared that the young villain who led the horse had amused himself with a gallop, and, having no bridle, the horse, a young and well-fed animal, had borne the aspiring cavalier into the midst of the camp-followers, and had run over the wife of this man. Calling in the aid of some 'old men,' we proceeded to judge the affair, and began by telling the man—who was a full-tressed

ruffian—that as he was doubtless a gentleman and a man of honour, we should not require witnesses, but trust to his own account of the damage done. Gracefully balancing himself, he commenced the conversation. 'My wife,' said he, 'is severely wounded, and I know not whether she will be able to cook my supper, or to carry my kit; but we will pass over this as an injury too vast for pecuniary compensation, and proceed to facts. Item, a plate for cooking, one salt; a gourd for water, half a salt; another magnificent gourd, priceless indeed, one salt.' Tired of the catalogue, I offered him three salts *in toto*, for all damages—wife included—which he accepted, after stating that it was solely out of consideration for my very urbane conduct, and as he himself was an independent gentleman above want; but that he trusted I would give my lad sufficient warning not to be so reckless of other people's lives, as, had his wife been very seriously hurt, he should have killed him on the spot in the moment of anger.

I intended, indeed, to point out his indiscretion to the young gentleman, with the very effective argument of a bamboo; but, being of a merciful disposition, and remembering that the day had not long elapsed when I should much have enjoyed a similar freak, on anyone else's horse, I allowed the entreaties of the aforesaid 'old men' to induce me to pardon him. 'Old man,' be it observed, does not, in Abyssinia, necessarily infer a man grey with age; but one who, from his position or easy circumstances, his gravity, or his influence, is supposed to be 'grey in wisdom,' so that I was myself sometimes classed in the category of 'old men,' or *shamagella*.

I had a white horse, that was given to me by Toko Brillay: for speed, strength, endurance, and iron hoofs (no mean object where they never shoe), I seldom saw his equal in the country; but, put on what saddle you would,

his back was perpetually sore, and he was the most perfect specimen of vice and cunning I ever saw. Fasten the halter round his neck till he was almost strangled, during the night he would slip his head out of the noose, and standing quietly till daylight, he would then be off at a gallop into the woods and plains, and there he would remain till evening; sometimes, reckless of hyænas, the fancy would take him to spend the night in the jungle. In dismounting, if you were not very careful, he would turn like lightning and kick you; on the march he would take the first opportunity of breaking from his groom, and, though he could not eat on account of the bit, he would take a line of road of his own, of about half a mile to one side,breaking the saddle to pieces against the low branches, if possible, and as he started giving the boy a farewell kick. It was in vain that all the mounted cavaliers would join in the chase, as of a wild beast—in vain did we enclose him in a circle! Dashing his hind-legs in the face of one, and making a ferocious bound open-mouthed at another, he would scatter the enemy, and away at hopeless speed till nearly out of sight, when he would return and take up his old position in our flank; for he had, fortunately, conceived a violent affection for a bay gelding that I also had, whom he would not altogether desert, and without which affecting tie, I have not the least doubt that he would have converted himself into a wild horse, and resided far from the haunts of men. He became well known in the camp, and afforded a fund of amusement to the jocose 'chaffers' before mentioned, and the soldiery looked out for their daily chase as a matter of course; but I am afraid that the number of most unsanctified expressions which he provoked daily in my establishment, who certainly earned their bread on such occasions with the sweat of their brow, would by no means be approved of by bishops who have never owned such horses. The

Abyssinian idea was not a bad one, that he was ridden by a *zar*, or demon. I at last took to loading him with a large stone for grinding corn, but it required so many men to take care of the stone that they might as well have carried it, so the experiment was rather a failure. Another pleasing trait was, when mounted, his absolute and unconquerable objection to going straight forward, or doing anything but wheeling round with marvellous rapidity, unless led by the bay gelding; but when once roused into his natural spirit, and shaking off the *zar*, he would go off with an action, a fire, and a speed that rejoiced the heart of his rider, and, in one of his rare days of good humour, was the best horse I ever rode in the country.

In Gojam, the first thing that generally happens, on encamping, is to set fire to the long dry grass, that kindles like the prairies of America. Then it is *sauve qui peut*, striking of tents, and general confusion. All the soldiers run to the endangered point, and there is a regular battle with the fire, which they endeavour to extinguish with the skins of their bedding, or their sheep-skins, wearing apparel, &c. When once on fire, these plains generally burn for days, the smoke or the blaze, at night, being visible for many miles. On the first shower of rain, the young grass springs up in a night on the soil thus manured, and the deer are seen in hundreds revelling on the tender young shoots.

The rains in Gojam cease but for a few months in the year, which renders the country so fine for cattle. Thus, while the rest of Abyssinia is yet parched, during Lent, and for two months or more after it, in Gojam partial rains have already commenced, and the ground begins to look fresh and green. Again, heavy rain is sometimes seen there in December, while in Teegray and Begemder there is little or none after September. During the dry

season, the trace of the valley is always distinctly seen from the huge volumes of smoke, rising like clouds from the burning jungle beneath, which is fired every year, as the rank luxuriance of vegetation during the rains almost obliterates both the paths and the cultivated spots.

In traversing those districts in the month of November, you have to force your way through grass ten or twelve feet high, and your bare legs and body are torn to pieces with the thorns, that have shot out in every direction. A large branch of the low *canta-tuffa* thorn—which, being curved, never lets go its hold (indeed, small fish in the lake are sometimes caught with it)—seizes you by the leg; your obstinate mule, hard-mouthed, and half-asleep, as usual, plods on regardless of your agonised tugs, and your only hope of saving your flesh is in retreat. Just at this moment, a large *agamen*, a straight thorn of a couple of inches in length, springing back, from the impetus given to it by your predecessor in the path, buries itself deep in your cheek; writhing in anguish, your loose floating cotton cloth, which hitherto you have scrupulously gathered up, escapes from you, and is caught by the remorseless *canta-tuffa*, and a hundred of his demoniac brethren, with exulting joy. You are urged on by a press of wayfarers in the rear, the path admitting only one: unable to slip over the tail of your mule, as you would willingly do, owing to the ingenious saddle (or rather box) with its back a foot high, you at last resign the reins in despair, finding that every effort to extricate yourself only involves you more hopelessly; and the unfeeling animal drags you violently forth, bleeding, and almost blind with perspiration and impotent rage, to examine at leisure, and with what philosophy you may, your scored person and your now ragged garments. As you pass along, you constantly shudder on beholding the

numerous evidences of such conflicts, and of the superior prowess of the thorns, in the rags displayed as trophies on every bush—feeling, however, a grim delight to think that you are not the only victim.

In a few days we returned to the neighbourhood of our first camp, when I demanded of Bourroo permission to leave him, as reports were every day becoming stronger of the approaching campaign of the Ras. By the influence of Immer Sahalo he was induced to consent, treating me with great friendship, begging me to return to him, and giving me a servant to accompany me to Bahar Dar. He also took a mule from an officer of the household, and gave it to me, pleading the want of a good one, and promising again, as usual. I said that would serve me very well—indeed, I was glad to get it, as my two horses were nearly dead with fatigue; and I should have been obliged to proceed on foot to Bahar Dar, as I dared not yet spend the little money I had, in luxuries.

Within half an hour I left the camp, and, with the usual contradiction of human nature, with as much joy as I entered it; not from any special dislike to anything or anybody in it—on the contrary, I had had every reason to be satisfied—but simply from the love of change, and of the wildest freedom, that first led me to Abyssinia, and which made me feel as imprisonment the least restraint such as Bourroo had attempted to exercise.

Leaving the camp on a hot afternoon, I found my guide in advance—a pleasant young man with a hare-lip, and rejoicing in the name of *Desta*, signifying happiness or joy. After some consultation, we agreed to go the lower road by Devra Werk, avoiding the high and cold mountain range that we had crossed on a previous occasion; as Bourroo had, indeed, recommended me, stating that the country was beginning to be disturbed on the news of the Ras's approach, and that robbers

would render the mountain districts dangerous. We journeyed leisurely, and passing a small village, the picturesque church with its shade, and the greensward around it, tempted me to dismount. The balmy air of the evening, the lowing of the cattle returning over the plains stretched out beneath me, the small streamlet, with women carrying their earthen jars, and the silence that reigned, but little reminded one of a country the incessant prey of war; but on turning to the broken church, crumbling and overgrown with moss, with one miserably-clad priest counting his beads under a tree, a donkey grazing on the burial-ground with its broken wall, and the fallen huts with but scanty smoke to promise the evening meal, I sighed as I thought what such a country might be made!

Turning for relief to contemplate the beauties of nature, unvexed by man, away from the dark, dank church, where no beam of warmth penetrated, I found that an old villager, white-headed and feeble, had approached me. With the aid of his pipe we soon became social, and he began to chat to me on the sufferings of his native home, and of his wanderings; his eye somewhat lighting up as he pointed out to me the plain below as the scene of the great battle between Bourroo and Dejaj Maturta, in which the latter was defeated, but only after a bloody action and great deeds of personal valour, and in which I fancy the old man had taken his share, as he pointed out each clump. My guide warning me that we should miss our road, and the fords of the brooks, I gave the old man some tobacco, and pressed on, but was again delayed in chasing some deer, who were feeding in every direction. We came, just at dark, to a village very dusty and dirty, but more populous than the last, where a number of soldiers were in full contest with the villagers, regarding their night's lodging.

Taking the very disinterested advice of both parties, as it coincided with my own opinion, I left them, and pushed for another church over a plain, where my guide assured me dwelt the chief of this part of the country. As was foretold, we had some difficulty in finding the crossing of a small rivulet, and at last leaped the beasts over a narrow part, and, finding the cold on the plain becoming disagreeable, went on at a run to the church we had seen. Arousing them, the inhabitants refused point-blank to admit us, and said that we must go on to the chief, half a mile farther, at another village. This I had no disposition to do, especially as it was late, and he was a stranger to me; so I sent Bourroo's domestic, under guidance of a boy, hostage for the truth of the fact, and philosophically sat down on a dunghill to await his return. The inhabitants of this village are notoriously churlish, and they had become worse by the shifts to which they were put in these endless wars.

In about an hour my servants came back with orders, under penalties, to lodge and feed us well, with a civil message to myself—which of course I attributed to the neighbourhood of the Prince's camp, where I bore the reputation of being in high favour. Milk in Gojam being always plentiful, a supper with abundance of that, fresh from the cow, can never be despised; and having also found time, before sunrise, to make a slight repast on the same wholesome article, I sent my domestics on the road to Devra Werk, stepping on one side myself, with one or two servants, to see the 'great little man.' He received me politely, but the style of his house was that of vulgar profusion, and I did not relish his meal half as well as the fresh milk of the poor countryman.

Let me assure the reader that one familiar with the language, and accustomed to live in habits of intimacy with the people, may as easily distinguish, in Abyssinia as else-

where, between gentlemanly and cordial hospitality, and the vulgarity that receives you in order to display its own consequence, and the superiority of a full pocket (if in Europe), and of plenty of mead and an abundance of ragged followers (if in Abyssinia); though, indeed, in disinterested liberality to a stranger, I would not venture to compare the Ethiopian with the truly generous European, as it is seldom, be his manner ever so agreeable and polished, that a small present, well offered, will not be acceptable; at the same time, great allowances must be made for the extreme poverty of the country—just sufficiently acquainted with luxury to become covetous, without possessing sufficient to be generous,—and for their idea that all white men are possessed of treasures inexhaustible. Gojam is better in this respect than the rest of the country, and indeed I gave no presents to anyone during my stay in that part, save those I have already mentioned; and Bourroo, as may be seen, made me a handsome return, caused doubtless by his pride, and a desire to be well spoken of by strangers.

I soon left the great man, and, journeying rapidly, rejoined my people near the town of Devra Werk, which, having suffered less than most of the sacred cities from the Ras's visitations, bore the unusual appearance of bustle. It occupies a bleak, dusty, and disagreeable situation, on a hill, with scarce a tree to break the monotony of the surrounding plains, while even those of the church look more bare and distressed than usual. Sending to the market to buy some meat for my servants, we rested an hour while they discussed the meal, with their usual gusto, at a clear streamlet where there was some short herbage for the beasts, our guide informing us that our night's restingplace would be reached only after passing a long tract of jungle—now, alas! the most prominent feature in Gojam. He soon roused us, and journeying

through endless forests of thorns, it was nightfall before we saw some cows and a little smoke, rising in a most desert place of wild jungle, ravine, and glen, said to abound with lions. This giving promise of a village, we quitted the road, and ascended an eminence leading to the church; but it was some time before we could find the houses, which indeed the villagers now studiously conceal. After dark we obtained a miserable lodging, the huts being all in a falling state, the object, necessarily in such times, being to appear as poor as possible. Cows, however, were very numerous, though we were told that they had been plundered a year previously by Bourroo's people; milk was not wanting, and the numerous fleas had the good effect of making us start at an extremely early hour in the morning.

The next day we had contemplated reaching Mota, but—the bay horse being so weak by this time, from want of rest and food, that he could hardly walk—we stopped at another large *geddam* called Keranion, a few miles nearer, early in the day. On arriving at the house of the Alika, we found a grand feast in progress, for the souls of the dead, that generally takes place three months after; and in consequence all the worthy priests, including the Alika, and one half the towns-people, were in a state of partial inebriation from beer, which on these occasions is not spared. At last, with great difficulty and by dint of threats, my guide obtained a hearing, delivered Dejaj Bourroo's dictum, and was requested to wait till they cleared the house, which was effected in about an hour.

Early the next morning we reached Mota, where reports of the Ras's near approach were rife. The governor—whose friendship for me had by no means increased by having heard, through his son, that I had told Bourroo, very frankly, how he had first received me—

would not see me, but was obliged to order me suitable lodgings, and to send a guide with me the next day. As the valley of the Ava, he said, was now rendered impassable by *schiftas*, who had declared for the Ras, he directed the guide to take me by the lower road, though somewhat longer. On reaching the mansion of the first man of rank, the sun being now almost insupportable, my feet were pretty well roasted. Imagine walking down a road too steep for a mule, the pathway consisting of fine sand and loose gravel and flints mingled, barefoot, with a sun that made even the practised Abyssinians dance now and then involuntarily; the straps that fastened the soles to my toes, had given way in the first few minutes of this work, and I was obliged to shuffle along as I best could, obtaining an excellent notion of the system of the worthy doctor in 'Sandford and Merton,' with his gouty patient.

All my distress, as usual with humanity if it will but wait, evaporated in a most hearty welcome from the master of a very good house, who evidently was on good terms with himself and all the world. He forced us into his house, made myself and all my servants perfectly at ease in five minutes, the ladies of the house, spinning most industriously, contributing to the same; and while waiting about ten minutes for a capital breakfast (a hot *shirro* and white *teph* bread), an immense jar of mead was poured into us, with much vociferation at everybody's delay in attending to us, and direct insults to ourselves for not being sufficiently thirsty, though the sun we fancied had made us tolerably so. He said it was impossible to move till the cool of the evening, and began, as usual, to ask me an unlimited string of the most wonderful questions about my country: such as, were there any women at Jerusalem (*i.e.* the country of all white men)? what corn grows? what cooking do you eat?

what do you like there? is there any grass? &c. &c. I leave the reader to exercise his imagination in divining my answers, amid a quintette of voices, all desiring immediate particulars and definite information regarding all the countries beyond the sea. If we did not arrive at any very satisfactory result, I was at least amused, and they were wonder-stricken, till my hour of departure came—too quickly, as they unanimously declared; but my guide, like fate, was inexorable, and giving me a trusty domestic to conduct me, as the valley-people have little respect for the highlanders, our host wished me a very kind farewell.

My feet, somewhat sore from the morning's exercise, had to undergo another tread over the stones down a steep path that made me run, whether I would or not, to the Ava. On each side of the stream—here narrow, with little water, but so strong as to render the crossing of the beasts a matter of some difficulty—the almost perpendicular rocks, covered with thorns, almost shut out the light of day; though we had left a bright sun above, here it appeared as if it were nightfall. The water of the brook was extremely cold (a feature in most of the rivers of Gojam), but on one side of it there was a spring of warm water, over which, in evidence of its medicinal virtue, a small straw hut had been erected; this, in the rainy season, would be lost in the body of the river. My Abyssinian servants lost no time in bathing themselves therein, as a general precaution against disease.

On emerging from the ravine, we found that the sun was just setting, and, following our guide, and the cows—that were slowly quitting the jungle, where they had been feeding, for the village—a quarter of an hour's ride took us there, where, arranging ourselves on stones in a conspicuous position, we awaited the result of the message of our guide. This brought down the chief of the village,

a mild and placid old gentleman, though rather prosy, who, having duly displayed his consequence by divers whispers and solemn consultations with his two domestics, requested me to follow him, saying that my suite would be cared for; he took me to his house, which was a duplicate of the one I had breakfasted at, and I found the owner equally hospitable, but somewhat more inquisitive. We supped on a fowl, which, though in size about equal to the leg of an English capon, with the assistance of some curds, managed, thanks to Abyssinian cooking, to furnish a respectable meal for a dozen.

This being a marvel, it doubtless merits explanation. The party being seated, with bread laid round the table, white or brown according to their rank, the aforesaid fowl is placed with solemnity in the centre, and the cover whipped off by the cook-maid that brought it. The Asalafic, having previously washed his hands, tears off, with dexterous rapidity, a portion of bread, and, lightly brushing it over the surface of the dish, throws it to the cook-maid to taste—on the theory, now a custom in most cases, of this being a safeguard from poison. If she be a favourite, the Asalafic contrives to give her a good lump of everything. The bread is soft, and adapted to retain gravy, which consists of onions, butter, and red pepper (with curious little addenda, supposed to be spices), in about equal proportions. The fowl is for some time set aside as a sacred *bonne bouche*, and this process of dipping the bread in the gravy is gone through, with silence and celerity, by the Asalafic, only interrupted by your host; he, begging you to eat, rolls up about a quarter of a loaf (ingeniously exhibiting, at one end of the roll, a small mass of the aforesaid onions and pepper), and thrusts it forcibly into your mouth, without regard to the evident disproportion between the mouth and the morsel; and you are obliged,

suffocated with dry bread, and cursing the laws of politeness from pole to pole, to masticate the megatherium civility, at the imminent risk of one or both your eyes starting from their sockets. Scarcely have you recovered from the shock (and Heaven preserve you from a similar act of friendship on the part of his wife !) when the fowl is at last distributed, each bone being presented to you as something that there is no saying 'No' to; it is prudent, indeed, however hungry you may be, from the commencement of the meal, to say that you are quite satisfied —in fact, that you have made an excellent dinner, as, what between such morsels as I have described—(pressed on you in the name of your host's death, and of the Prince's death, and of your father's death, and then by our Lady Mary and all the saints of the Calendar)—and the stray bits you must continue picking, before the end of the said meal you will generally have a tolerable presentiment of plethora, and approaching nightmare. It would be extremely rude to refuse, and however wistfully you may eye the beer-jar, that mockingly rests, open-mouthed, upon a stool opposite to you, and longing to 'drink though death be in the draught,' it is not the custom (that fiendish word that lurks at each turning!) to hand the horn round, until the master of the house is served, which rarely happens until the last strong bone of the fowl is anatomised, every vestige of gravy is scraped from the dish by a small stick, and the operation of deliberately washing hands is gone through—all which you watch with a fervent anxiety for its termination.

Having drunk so much beer, under the same system of torturing politeness, that when I retired I felt that my dreams would be of swallowing the Nile after eating the Pyramids, I was shown to a separate mansion; and requesting information, was told that their floor was unendurable on account of the fleas, and the wooden

couch was recommended, though undeniably afflicted with bugs. Following the advice, I essayed repose; but legions of these little vermin made so furious and so effectual an onset, that, as I did not sleep in armour, in about five minutes I followed Hudibras's prescription, and was standing, in a state of demi-frenzy and demi-sleep, under a bright full-moon, in the lightest possible attire, having left my cloth in possession of the foe. Hereupon my domestics, hearing the door burst open, rushed out after me, with sundry war-cries and snatching-up of weapons, and mildly represented that the hyænas in these parts were dangerous. For all answer, I seized the cloth of the foremost, shook it, and, rolling myself in that cover on the flattest and least stony ground I could select, in about five minutes had forgotten hyænas, bugs, and fleas, and was swimming with my host in a lake of butter, pepper, and onions, striving in vain to reach an enormous fowl, that was scuttling merrily away, with a hogshead of beer on its head.

My entertainer would fain have repeated the banquet on the following morning; but, pleading my anxiety to reach the cooler country before the sun should heat his oven of a valley, I slipped away at daylight, promising, if ever I met him again, to bring him some medicines, and thinking that one for indigestion would be very necessary. This tract is so stony, that it is marvellous how the corn and grass come up at all; indeed, in all these valleys it is the same, but here there are the most abundant springs in the country. An hour took me up the hill, and again we breathed fresh air and cool breezes on the plains of Tslala; but as the sun grew warm, I felt the irritation of the blood, which I had begun to experience from the previous evening; and after proceeding a short distance, I recognised, certainly without welcome, my old friend the Massowah fever. Finding myself unable to

sit the mule, after some efforts, I dismounted, and threw myself under a tree, and, having sent two horsemen to search for water (which they happily found), I went through the exact process of the cold and hot fit, with a force that rendered me almost delirious; I remained there till about three o'clock, when it left me.

I had previously sent on my people with the weak horse, and, mounting myself, soon came up with him; slowly staggering along, we got him over a mile or two to a stream near a village that I knew, and then, telling the villagers that they should have a reward if I found him recovered in a fortnight, I left my servant to get him that far, with directions to follow me the next morning. With all the despatch I could use, the rest of my followers, with my horse, had gone too far for me; and with the Prince's guide, and another servant, I followed the cows to a large village—that was, as usual, nearly deserted, through a report that the Ras had crossed, and that Bourroo's Fit-Aurari, my old friend, had fled from his camp. Now, that camp being distant only about four hours' good walking, this may show the difficulty of obtaining accurate information in this country. Milk was our principal support.

At dawn, anxious for my horse, I started, and reached my servants, just stretching themselves in their very comfortable quarters, which they owed to the horse. The animal not being saddled, and being very handsome, was, with the usual ready wit of the soldier, converted into a present from Bourroo to the Fit-Aurari; and strict orders being given to feed it well, they themselves were luxuriously lodged as the trusty servants of the Prince, and were, as I arrived, just preparing for a vociferous attack on the villagers for a sumptuous breakfast. Telling them to follow me quickly, in a couple of hours we reached the camp, when I was immediately admitted, and received with the kiss of welcome by the Fit-Aurari,

who, however, expressed surprise at my having left Bourroo. This was explained by the guide, who delivered to him Bourroo's order that he should supply me with house, food, &c. at Bahar Dar, so long as I chose to remain there, and generally to be my friend, or 'relative,' as the term would be, literally translated; he expressed his acquiescence, and said that I must stay with him till the *Kibella*, a great feast on the Saturday before Lent, as nobody would travel on that day, or Sunday, Lent commencing on the Monday.

If, with my friend of the valley, I had experienced the full meaning of the word bug, I here, on this occasion, obtained some idea of that of flea; and flight being impossible, and philosophy difficult, I took the course of sleeping as much as possible in the daytime. My servants found no difficulty in doing this, as, there being no corn in the camp, and consequently no bread, they were not troubled with calls to meals, but did the best they could. One, assuming some hideous rags, and trusting to a pleasing face and whining voice, excited the compassion of a wealthy dame, and rejoiced in a breakfast; another, cutting up a leaden ball in small pieces, sold some as antimony to a waiting-damsel; but a less fortunate comrade, in trying the same experiment, had to run for it—from no worse weapon, however, than a woman's tongue. I myself was satiated with mead, rather than with the staff of life, which, however, is by no means bad nourishment. On the Saturday, even the ceremony of laying our dinner was dispensed with, the Fit-Aurari privately refreshing himself in his *Elfun*, or apartment of his wife (a common resource with the Abyssinian chief when he has no bread to give his people), and afterwards appearing at the *adirash*, and ordering unlimited *tejj*; he was also doubly out of humour, by the escape of an important prisoner, whom I had previously met in chains

there, and the treachery of a confidential domestic just discovered; consequently he damped all attempts at *doomfata*, and solaced himself with four Asmarees, who, seated close to him, kept up an incessant din, and chanted his praises, led by a most shrill-voiced female.

I took a crotchet into my head that Bourroo had intimated to the Fit-Aurari to keep me, if possible, with him, and, as an experiment, had a little tiff with him, saying that I wished to start at once, as I had important business at Bahar Dar. As he hesitated in giving me permission to leave, I left the *adirash*, and ordered my mule about noon. Great was the consternation, and numerous were the messages, promising to send me with an escort the next morning at daylight, and representing also the danger of travelling alone in Maycha. As I had no intention of starting, I suffered myself to be led back to the *adirash*, and we wound up a brilliant evening—the *tejj* being, as an Abyssinian would say, *gooff*, or 'sudden flood.'

The next morning, lamenting that I could not stay the Sunday, he gave me a *gamee* (a species of land midshipman), who had orders, of a somewhat indefinite description, to impress an escort whenever he could find one; but, as I cared little about that, I asked no questions. What appeared more to the purpose was a verbal order, to be delivered by the said *gamee* to the officer in authority at Bahar Dar, for ten *madagas* of corn and ten salts, as a present supply; for which thanking the chief, we went to Furrus Wagga, where breakfast and beer were ordered for us. My excellent domestics, who had been famished for two days, had preceded us, and, without waiting for our guide, I found them installed by the strong hand in divers dwellings, showing every intention of making up for lost time. The airs that the Abyssinian gives himself on these occasions, alternately coaxing, threatening, and

commanding with a princely gesture, afforded me a never-failing source of laughter; and as they do no real damage, and part generally better friends with the *balagger*, or countryman, than when they met, the amusement is unalloyed by pain; though it is very different when the soldiers are of the enemy's party, or if they are sent expressly to 'eat' upon an unruly village, when they think little of slicing off an ear or two, or breaking and destroying property, on the least delay or murmur.

Following the example of my inferiors, and succumbing to my guide, who had no idea of throwing away so excellent an opportunity of playing the master, I discussed a jar of beer and a morsel in the way of breakfast. It being, as I have stated, Kibella, beer was plentiful of course, and everybody was busily employed in eating and drinking, as though they would lay in a stock for many days of fast. Furrus Wagga is a pretty village, clean and cheerful, in a sheltered hollow, and surrounded with well-cultivated fields, and a plain of grass, where the beasts of the village pasture unfenced, and the children play. You remember it with regret on passing through the desert of Salala, one of the wildest and, as I have already shown, most dangerous in Abyssinia, without the sign of man, save the scarce-discoverable ruins of villages, now mounds of earth, showing that it was not always thus.

On this occasion, my *gamee* stating that the escort was to be found by the upper road, which was tolerably secure, we went by that, as there are hamlets and cultivation on some part of it, though, shortly after leaving Furrus Wagga, there is a very disagreeable tract of wilderness, the favourite resort of robbers. Anxious to reach Bahar Dar that evening, I would not be tempted by the sport this place afforded, but pressed steadily on, our hope of an escort becoming beautifully problematical; and, in fine, our guide at last acknowledged that the matter had

not been very well arranged, and that the warriors were to be picked up about three miles from Bahar Dar. We dispensed with their company, and reached Bahar Dar by our unassisted powers before sunset. Sending a message to the Alika, he gave us a lodging for the night in the house of some Zillau, who had taken up their temporary residence under the protection of the *geddam*, and sent in our supper.

The next morning, as I calculated upon a long stay in the town, I set about seeking quarters. Our friend took in my three beasts for a consideration, having a large house, and very little money to thatch it with; and my acquaintance of breast-beating memory offered me a small hut for myself, and the general use of all outlying domains and doorways for my suite. Accepting this, and being rather puzzled as to bread (for, even if the officer should propose his readiness to give me the salts and corn at once, who was to grind it and bake it?)—in defiance of the fast, and compelled by hunger, I purchased a bullock for two dollars, and immediately slaughtered it, for the general consumption—as my servants, following my example, did not fast; and, in reply to the enquiries of the priests, as to who had had the hardihood to kill meat on the first day of the fast in a *geddam*, I replied that ill-health had, unfortunately, rendered it necessary for me to do this violence to my feelings and theirs. Our neighbour of the nearest house afterwards told me that, much doubting our orthodoxy, he had slily directed his son (a little boy) to listen to the words the butcher pronounced on slaying the beast; these being satisfactorily Christian—viz., 'In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,'—his mind became at ease, and the delicate soul of the robber and assassin was satisfied that it might mingle with ours without pollution.

In a day or two I obtained, at three salts per month,

a *gojo* somewhat larger, and a maidservant to prepare our bread. The officer of the Fit-Aurari refused us the corn and salts without a written order, and I purchased all I wanted at the market, one of the cheapest and best in Abyssinia. As I passed a sufficiently long period in this town, being thus domiciled in it, I will give some account of the locality.

CHAPTER XIII.

LAKE TSANA—ZEGGY—PROVINCE OF MAYCHA—MY NEIGHBOURS—A FIGHT—ZARS—THE RAS DISPLEASED—THREATENING ASPECT OF AFFAIRS—THE RAS PACIFIED—START TO JOIN HIS VANGUARD—SUSPECT TREACHERY, AND RETURN TO BAHAR DAR—DISTURBED STATE OF THE COUNTRY—SPORTING AND FISHING—BOURRO HAILO—LEAVE BAHAR DAR FOR YAWISH AND THE GALLA COUNTRY.

THE Lake Tsana, situated about eighteen miles to the southward of Gondar, is bounded on the north and east by the immense plains of Dembea, Mitrala, Fogera, &c., that of Fogera extending, in one direction, about thirty miles from the edge of the lake; these plains, in the rains—being of the same level, and a dead flat—become inundated marshes, and are nearly abandoned. At this time, wild rice, called *afizzo*, springs up in profusion; and as soon as the retiring waters permit of the mud (a stiff species of clay) becoming somewhat firm, these plains are covered with innumerable cattle, brought by the Zillau from the highlands of Waggera, Semada, and other places, where they have passed the rainy season; and a brisk cultivation commences, principally of grain, while the nomads supply all the neighbouring markets with butter and hides.

On quitting the plains of Fogera, still passing to the southward, along the eastern bank of the lake, after crossing the River Gumara, the country is sufficiently hilly to prevent any inundation, but is still a warm and low district, till you arrive at Korata. From this, again, a considerable plain, also the resort of the Zillau, takes you to the Nile, which here quits the lake, at its south-east corner,

having traversed its waters; and in a small and sheltered bay is the town of Bahar Dar Georgios, become of late years populous and flourishing, owing to the destruction, as I have elsewhere stated, of so many villages between it and Furrus Wagga, whose inhabitants have here taken refuge. Close to it, the lake is studded with villages, each possessing its church, and almost entirely in the hands of the priesthood, who are in great force in these parts of Abyssinia, and almost independent of the secular power, enjoying in these secluded islets a reputation for extreme sanctity. I cannot vouch for the latter fact, but I can for their peculiar and disagreeable insolence.

Opposite, and distant about ten miles, on a promontory stretching into the lake, is the holy town of Zeggy, built on the side of a mountain; its lower houses being on the border of the water, and a church crowning the crest of the hill. Here oranges are grown in profusion, and its inhabitants boast of the most beautiful women, and the most daring banditti, in Abyssinia. I shall describe their chief presently, and some of their habits. The entire circumference of the lake is surrounded by the hamlets of the Wytos, the hunters of the hippopotami, that abound here. All these countries, however, though productive and beautiful, are unhealthy, and fevers at certain seasons are prevalent. On the other side of Bahar Dar there is an extensive grass-plain, from which you plunge at once into the gloom and wilderness that follows the course of the Nile. The province of Maycha is divided from Begemder by the Nile, from Gojam by the Ava, from Damot by the Choker, crossed here by the pass of Ahmedamut, and merges into the country of the Agows on the south-west and west, which again is separated by the Nile (that has here made its circle of Gojam) from the arid deserts occupied by the Shankallas or Negro tribes.

The people of Maycha and Achifaree are usually

governed by an *Ajaz*, alternately appointed by the Ras and Bourroo ; but it is impossible that a stranger should be appointed, as the people will obey none but those possessing a strong family influence, the bonds of kindred being here sustained with a clanlike fervour. As there must then be, necessarily, two or more parties, each of whom has it favourite chief, the Ras supports the one, and Bourroo supports the other. At the same time, every man in Maycha has his shield on his arm, and his sword by his side, and considers himself entitled to settle his little private quarrels as he finds most suitable : if checked, he throws himself into the wilderness, and there robs all he can, with the most unscrupulous impartiality. The countrypeople are not the inoffensive unwarlike race that they are in most parts of Abyssinia ; every ploughboy has his shield and spear, and every man is on occasion a soldier : in fact, though speaking the Amharic language, they bear a strong family resemblance to the Gallas in these points ; and as for being governed, the thing has never been achieved. They are necessarily brave, their lives being spent mostly in fighting, plundering, and blood-feuds ; and there is little more resemblance between Maycha and the rest of Abyssinia, than there was, a hundred years or so back, between the Highlander and the Southron. The only tolerably peaceable portion of its inhabitants are the numerous Zillau, who abound in a district so favourable for herds, and who are, in consequence, plundered remorselessly by all the chiefs in turn, with or without pretence.

Immediately on obtaining my little hut, I sent two domestics across to Korata, to bring me news of the movements of the Ras. By-the-bye, to give some idea of the unsettled state of the district, I may mention that in cutting wood and grass, at about a mile or so from the town, I was obliged to obtain the company of a youth of

the country for my servants (the domestic of a friend of mine much feared and well known), to ensure their safety. I purchased nearly thirty *madagas* of barley for a dollar, and fifteen *madagas* of teph and honey extremely cheap; so, putting myself quite at ease on the subject of provisions, I began to make a little mead, and therewith cultivate the acquaintance of my neighbours.

These were two brothers, a middle-aged and pretty sister, and their old mother, with divers poor connexions and relations, who emerged from time to time from strange-looking huts, of which I could never discover the doors. The history of the family I soon had in full from my servants, who were in about half an hour perfectly at home, offering pinches of snuff to all the world, and playing the *kanar* (a little six-stringed guitar of six notes) to celebrate the deeds of heroes, and to the torture of all musical ears. Having found that the elder brother possessed a *beggara*, or the harp of David of ten strings, they brought him forcibly before me, harp and all; and the other brother following, with the little children and the peeping servant-maid, we were soon excellent friends, and a little mead made us sworn brothers.

I saw that the eldest brother was no common character, and here is a little morceau of history that I learnt the same evening. His name was Tedla Aroon, Aroon being the family name. The head of the clan, if I may so call it, was Dejaj Hilo, the natural chief of Abocabo, by whom, till his death a few months before, the Aroons had been upheld. Tedla Aroon, having quarrelled with another powerful branch, had first taken to the road with his brethren, and became the terror of the country and of the merchants for years, being indeed a man of unequalled audacity. At last he crowned his exploits by a feat of great renown. The Ras had crossed into Gojam, and installed Hassamee Durrus, the one great chief in Maycha; and Bourroo's

adherent, Gabro Yesoos, took as usual to the desert strongholds, and with him his chief officer and friend, named Damfo Welda Mariam, the great enemy of Tedla. This latter, familiar with the country by his long predatory habits, obtained information that at a certain small village in the forest, Damfo Welda Mariam, with one or two hundred followers, was in the habit of passing the night. Taking with him only five or six resolute relatives, he entered the village at midnight, and carried off Damfo Welda Mariam, bodily, from the midst of his sleeping guards. On the alarm being given, they pursued him, and, the captive being a man of enormous weight, running with such a baby was out of the question. Laying him down therefore, bound, in a field of high grass, Tedla placed his sword on his neck, and told him that the first cry would be the signal for his death, at the same time informing him who he (Tedla) was; finally, the soldiers, having searched in vain, soon went off on a wrong scent, and their chief, who had defied armies, was thus ingloriously carried off to the camp of Hassamée Durrus, with whom the captor immediately became prime favourite, and was restored to all his father's country.

In about six months the sons of Damfo Welda Mariam, watching their opportunity, assaulted Tedla one moonlight night (when he was probably bound on some plundering expedition with only a few followers) in great force after; fighting bravely, and wounding many, his own party fled, and he was left for dead with thirteen wounds—among others a gash on his head, a spear through his groin to the back, another in his lungs, and one through the arm; and though picked up breathing, his life was despaired of; but in a few months he appeared at the camp as well and lively as ever, and was forthwith set down as a devil that could not be killed. When Bourroo, as usual, routed the Ras's generals, and, among

others, Hassamee Durrus was driven across the Nile by his troops, Tedla, after fighting bravely, escaped to Bahar Dar; and, supporting himself by his old trade on the Begemder side of the water, now and then paid a visit to Hassamee Durrus (who had taken up his residence at Korata, till better times), on market-days—always, of course, with great precautions, that he might not be entrapped on the road.

On one of these occasions a row took place in the market, between some friends of Tedla and the soldiers of Hassamee Durrus, when one of the latter insulting Tedla, and offering to strike him, Tedla drew his *shotel*, and laid him dead at a blow; he was immediately seized, and taken to the chief, who gave orders for his slaughter, the next day, by the relations of the man he had killed —indeed, he dared not to do otherwise, whatever he might wish—and added a caution to take care he did not escape from them, as he certainly had dealings with Satan. They bound him fast in a house, and divided themselves into watches to guard him during the night: he was tied with his own belt; and, managing to loosen it about midnight, saw that his guards, with the usual carelessness of Abyssinians, were asleep. Putting on his belt, girding his sword, and taking down his spear and shield, that were all in the room, he walked out. 'I was on the point,' he said, 'of killing two or three of the sleepers, but I reflected that I had enemies enough on my hands already.' He then bestowed himself in a friend's house, and remained quietly there for three days, till, pursuit being given up (under the idea that he had escaped to some distant country), he walked by night to Bahar Dar. As he said himself, 'I don't know how I escaped. I suppose, if the devil got me into the scrape, God mercifully took me out of it.' He had now effectually quarrelled with everybody, and was unable to take to the trade of

robbing on account of the power of his enemies, who would infallibly seize him, his country and father's lands being all in the hands of Damfo Welda Mariam; consequently, I found him and his brother—who was of course involved in all this, and who had also various little blood-feuds of his own special raising on his hands—starving, or nearly so, and singing mournful ditties to the harp on their past glories.

Having enlarged my hut and my acquaintance, I was patiently waiting for news, and passing the time in playing chess with Ajaz Hilo's son, or throwing the lance with my servants, when one afternoon we were suddenly startled by our feminine neighbours rushing in, and demanding frantically, if we were men, why we did not 'harness'? (I can't find another expression). On looking out, we saw our friends, Tedla and Walta, running, armed, in the direction of the plain, and the road to the church clouded with dust, by a confused mass of men and women pressing in every direction; the latter, after the most approved fashion, wringing their hands, and looking as picturesque and interesting as possible: for seldom does the Abyssinian coquette forget her appearance, especially as her nerves are ordinarily in such good order, that I have never heard of one having a fainting-fit. With much trouble, having caught a word among the confused outcry, I immediately concluded that some of the genus Tedla had arrived to plunder the town (of which they are quite capable), and gathered that they were fighting on the large plain close to us. Tying up all my little property, and leaving a small boy, very indignant thereat, to take care of the hut—with orders, if he saw the battle approaching too near, to run with the bay horse into the church, where several on the first alarm had already taken refuge, and were tolling the bell with great vigour—I sallied out, to see how matters stood. Close to us, but

somewhat obscured by dust, I saw a number of men running to and fro, apparently without any precise object. I imagined that these were searching for the enemy, when I was told that they were fighting, at which having expressed my entire acquiescence, I ordered my horses to be brought; and, as I could not yet make out the matter at all clearly, proceeded to join an elderly chief, a refugee, who was tranquilly seated on a large stone with a number of followers, and with whom I was acquainted. Here we arrived at the truth.

It appeared that the townspeople and the Zillau had quarrelled about some *chad* or *teph* straw for their cattle; and, in spite of great forbearance on the part of the latter, the insolence of the former had led to blows, and now to a regular fight; and the cows and women of the Zillau were pointed out to me, in full retreat over the plains towards the Nile: indeed, it was to give them time to escape that the nomads carried on the war so near the town, necessarily an unfavourable position for themselves. They did not number more than thirty, but all fine young fellows, brave, and of surprising activity and speed of foot; and though the townspeople were some hundreds—one real soldier with a scarlet war-shirt, and two ferocious horsemen with metal-covered shields to boot, to say nothing of women, who stood by, assisting with their tongues, in sufficient numbers to have eaten up the adversary without difficulty—yet, as few had really any stomach for the fight, and saw no reason for it, the herdsmen had evidently the best of it, keeping well together, and assisting each other with a will.

In a short time a breathless messenger arrived from the officer of Gabro Yesoos, one of the cavaliers, who pranced valiantly to and fro, begging me, as a friend of their master, to assist them. I replied that it was not the custom in my country to assist ten against one, and that,

moreover, I carried a gun to defend myself against robbery or lawless violence, not to shoot inoffensive Zillau for their pleasure—and then sat down to see it out. *Algas* were soon brought hurriedly from the town, and the wounded carried off on them to their dwellings, amid a tribe of howling and dishevelled damsels; in other directions, some limping and dejected warriors were supported across the plain by one or two stout nymphs. He of the scarlet shirt—whom, though a stranger, his fiery soul had led thither, eager for the fray—was presently ignominiously knocked down by a bamboo, and his arms and scarlet shirt seized by a half-naked Zillau, who executed a warlike dance in his unwonted finery, as the crestfallen hero walked home amid the jeers of all parties. The fight continued till, at sunset, the Chief Priest with the cross, and *tabot* or host, and banner of St. George, appeared, and solemnly excommunicated the next that should strike a blow. As it was nearly dark, and both parties were pretty tired, they separated with some parting kindnesses, not however until nearly every one of the townspeople had been wounded—among others, though slightly, our friends Tedla and Walta. The Zillau, during the night, crossed the Nile to Begemder, and could be no more molested.

Soon after this occurrence, at dead of night, a voice was heard crying, that the owner, having been warned by God, advised the inhabitants to repent, and weep, and fast, for that the Day when warning would be useless was at hand; but the sceptic Walta said it was only a monk intoxicated with beer, whose fumes had not yet passed off, and called for his supper. Accordingly, for seven days and nights, the cry for mercy was raised by the universal town, that the wrath might pass from them. A few nights after, another commenced the same song; but much weakened its solemnity, by stating, at the end,

that he was a pilgrim returned from Lallibella (a famous monastery), and had been refused his supper. This was decidedly carnal, and threw some doubts upon the authenticity of his predecessor.

The town was also thrown into a state of consternation by the intelligence from Zeggy, that an army, consisting of seven negaretes of *Zars*, had arrived there and killed seven priests, and, after playing old Bogie there, had made known their intention of campaigning by way of Bahar Dar. These *Zars* are spirits or devils of a somewhat humorous turn, who, taking possession of their victim, cause him to perform the most curious antics, and sometimes become visible to them while they are so to no one else—somewhat I fancy after the fashion of the 'Erl King.' The favourite remedies are amulets and severe tom-toming, and screeching without cessation, till the possessed, doubtless distracted with the noise, rushes violently out of the house, pelted and beaten, and driven to the nearest brook, where the Zar quits him, and he becomes well.

It is in vain to tell the Abyssinian that there are no such beings as his Zars and river-spirits, or Bouddhas. 'Were there not devils, and possessed, in the days of Jesus of Nazareth?' As a sincere Christian, this being undeniable, you venture to assert that all supernatural agency ceased with the Apostles. 'Very likely in your country, but not so in ours,' is the reply, and you leave off just where you began. As to a philosophical argument on the subject, seeing that it entirely puzzled all Europe a hundred years back, it would be, perhaps, advisable that the Ethiopian should be taught his alphabet previous to attempting it. Being of that opinion, I usually acquiesced in silence. As for defining the nature of a Zar more accurately, it is difficult: the more I enquired the more I was puzzled, each man giving a more

misty account than his neighbour; alsoas to wherein the functions of a Zar differed from that of a *Ganeem*, when it appeared that the Zar was a more sportively malicious spirit, and the *Ganeem* rather morose in his manners. The Zar is frequently heard, indeed, singing to himself in the woods, but woe betide the human eye that falls on him! The *Gau*, or water-spirit, like the 'kelpie,' drowns good swimmers in narrow streams, without any visible cause for their sinking. Such was the Abyssinian explanation of the death of M. Pétit, a Frenchman, drowned in crossing the Nile where it is narrow, and by no means rapid, on the route of Mota.

My servant had returned from Begemder, and I received the information that the Ras had collected his forces, and was bathing in the hot springs of Goramba. Previous to his departure for Gojam, my companion Bell, who had arrived at Korata from Gondar, was waiting to cross with him; and he wrote that the Ras was much exasperated against me, as my servant, who had brought me the ten dollars, had been taken on his return, and my note found to contain some expressions not very complimentary to his Highness; that, besides, there was the fact of my unceremonious departure from his camp, and that he himself was watched, now that my arrival was heard of, for fear that he should join me. In fact, in a few days, the officers of the Fit-Aurari suddenly vanished by night; and the next morning, the intelligence that Ajaz Gabro Yesoos had retreated, to join Bourroo in the interior, was confirmed by the appearance, at an early hour, of Hassamee Durrus with 200 or 300 mounted followers. After piously stopping to kiss the Church of St. George, in thanksgiving for once more placing his foot in warlike array on his native soil, he hurried on to collect his friends and adherents, and provisions for the ensuing campaign, as the Ras had not yet announced any of

the governors he intended to appoint, and all would have to follow him into Gojam. The soldiers of the Ras, that day and the next, began to fill the town, to pick up what they could, and Bourroo's adherents (my guide among the number) to step out of it.

A knot of the former came near my house the next afternoon. I did not like the way in which they were putting questions about me; and reflecting that, though the Ras would perhaps have much too great a contempt for me to annoy me, yet that he could scarcely prevent them from seizing me, under the pretence of my being an adherent of Bourroo, and of course plundering me of all I had, I walked quietly out of my hut, accompanied by one servant, without my belt or sword. On saluting them, they seemed somewhat taken by surprise, thus confirming my suspicions; but without giving them time to recover, and passing on as if for a stroll, I stepped quietly into the church, and *doweled*,—a process performed by tolling the bell, signifying that you have taken sanctuary, when a priest appears to ask who you are; having duly notified your answer to the Alika, and the news being spread about the town, you may return in safety to your dwelling. The soldiers, seeing at once that they had been too tardy, dispersed on hearing the bell, and came near me no more.

We now learnt that the Ras was encamped at Menta Devor, a high hill a few hours distant, and that he would cross that week by the bridge, the only one in good repair, over the Nile at Agitta, a long day's journey from us. As he had, in his careless way, expressed his willingness that I should return to him, my companion pressed me to do so; but, not being able to overcome my repugnance to that, I determined to join Dejaj Goscho, who had been set at liberty, and was to pass by way of Ahmedamut to Damot, while the Ras went by the Ava;

I should thus save my credit and my pride, and also the risk of the Ras ordering me to remain in Begemder, or return to my country, which was not improbable. Dejaj Goscho crossed first of the Ras's force, but information was so imperfect, that I resolved to travel in company with Fars Ingeda, the chief I have mentioned as a relation of Goscho, and who was sure to follow him. I sent word, in the meantime, that I only waited for the Ras to cross, to join him.

A servant of mine arrived the next morning, who had been beaten on the road, and only escaped robbery by having nothing to lose, telling me they had crossed that night, and that the Ras had pressed on at speed with only fighting-men, leaving all behind him, in the hope of surprising Bourroo ; and that it was just possible I might reach his camp by starting instantly, as, when once they had passed the Ava, Bourroo's adherents would appear in their rear, and would instantly close all communication. As the experiment would have been hazardous, after consulting with the old chief—who pledged himself to conduct us to Dejaj Goscho, wherever he might be, in safety—I kept to my original resolution.

We were delayed two days by the old gentleman being hampered by a lawsuit with his wife, and during this time I was rather struck with his peculiar anxiety that I should not start without him; let me also note that he bore, as I afterwards learnt, the nickname of Faro, expressive of his covetous and unscrupulous propensities. This is the name of a small beast, of the hyæna kind, that digs up the dead bodies in the churchyards at night. Walta had before left the town to join a chieftain serving with the Ras, and, being a man of well-known courage, had received a horse on arriving at the camp. Tedla in company, and with two donkeys, that I had purchased, laden with necessaries, we started.

I scarcely know what possessed me with a suspicion of the honest purposes of my friend. One reason was that he was of the country of Ahmedamut, notorious for the greatest scoundrels breathing; and no sooner had we started than his conference with a great horsebreaker, who accompanied us part of the way, and their looks at my horse (as I have remarked, a very handsome one) made me watchful. Again he asked me, as though jocosely, whether I had plenty of money on my donkeys, and appeared incredulous when I assured him of my poverty: now he at this time was in want of funds, to buy a horse and a decent mule, wherewith to present himself at the camp. About noon, when we rested, a servant in whom I had much confidence, and well experienced in the ways of Abyssinia (having been brought up in the house of Oobeay), told me that he had been called aside, and offers made to him of a horse, and a promise of land, if he would leave me; he was then asked if I had lately received supplies of money from Gondar, and if I had any gold on the donkeys.

We went on; and on arriving at Furrus Wagga, and hearing the intention of Fars Ingeda to proceed to Devra Mai, a mile or so farther, where he had relations, I told him that I also had a friend at the former place—in fact, my adopted daughter, with whom I should spend the night, and rejoin him at daylight. He seemed surprised, and after impressing on me to be sure and be early, he asked me if I would not send on my goods and people with him? I replied in the negative, and he left me. Thereupon we held a consultation: everyone unanimously gave it as his opinion that he only wanted to reach his adherents and family district at Ahmedamut to plunder me, and that he had purposely delayed our departure till Dejaj Goscho should be at a distance. Now, considering that he was bound by no ties—that the opportunity was most tempting—that he was in want, while my treasure

was supposed to be great—that the reclamation of property, once plundered, was visionary on the part of a stranger, in the disturbed state of the country (and, being under the displeasure of the Ras, I myself was much of the same opinion)—it was determined, *nem. con.*, that I should remain in Maycha, either until the Ras should return (possibly in a month or two), and then, on receiving my supplies, proceed into the Galla country with the aid of Bourroo, whose friendship would be much increased by my supposed fidelity; or else till some Governor of Maycha was sent by the Ras, through whose assistance I could proceed from chief to chief, to any part of Gojam where my companion might be heard of.

Here, at the house of my adopted daughter, I met a strange character—no less a person than a Zar, or a man who by spells, or through being spirited away by them in his childhood, obtains the power of intimate communication with those beings, and is regarded as one of them. He entered, and seated himself without saluting anyone. My daughter whispered me, in a tone of alarm, to salute him, or he might do us a mischief; and she was much terrified at my replying, that I was sorry his spirit-friends had not taught him better manners. His face was certainly as little human as any I ever saw, with a wild ugliness about it that might have done honour to the 'Black Dwarf,' and his eyes purposely rolling and unsteady. After a pause, during which I took no notice of him—though he kept up a conversation, strongly alluding to his powers, to draw my attention—he at last asked me why I did not salute him, saying that, as I was from Jerusalem, I must be one of the gifted, and that he knew my country well, as he had lately been there. Describing in what company he had travelled, he said that the servants of his king had no need of company, and that their ways were of the air, and not of the earth.

At last, willing to humour him, and amuse myself, I affected to be much struck with his remarks, and threw a tone of masonic mystery into my replies. At this he was much pleased, and, after an exchange of compliments on the extent of our mutual knowledge, he requested me to show him some curiosities. Having lighted a phosphorus candle, to the ecstasy of the company, who asserted that I carried fire even in my fingers, the Zar, without appearing astonished, essayed to light the same again; and, having necessarily failed in that proceeding, he explained to the gaping audience that it was a compound of soap, saltpetre, and sulphur, combined by an art that was peculiar, and quite unintelligible to vulgar capacities. Having enacted similar farces for some time, he informed me that he had the power of rendering himself invisible, and added that he could instantly transfer mules or horses from the stable of Ras Ali or any chief to his own.

I could not resist the temptation of asking him why so great a man went on foot, to which he replied that I had better take care of my own horse and mule, as he intended to make free with them that night, accompanied with a most awful and convulsive rolling of his optics. I said that he was quite welcome, and hoped that he would not, by any accident, receive damage from a pistol-ball or other weapon in performing the feat. He said he laughed at weapons, but added that it was quite possible for a white man to possess learning enough to resist his spells, so that, on the whole, we had better be friends, as our enmity might end in fearful damage to the country: to which I consenting, he promised to pay another visit, and left the house, with a start and stare sufficient to have thrown a regiment of Guards into hysterics. On receiving his promised visit in the afternoon, I found that it was, as I expected, to beg for various things, all of which I refused; and on his de-

manding more curiosities, being tired of him, I showed him a sack of flour and a bag of barley, when, beginning to perceive that I thought him an ass, he went his way, muttering something about a horse and a mule, and I saw him no more. This man is a favourite with all the chiefs, and well treated, in evidence of which he lives well; and having once killed somebody when the Zar was strong upon him, he was enabled to compound for a small sum of money with the relatives, in place of flying the country. The only fact I heard of him (if it was not an invention, as is most probable) was that, by writing in a coffee-cup, and giving the patient drink therefrom, he had cured a madman of many years' insanity.

On learning my resolution to return to Bahar Dar—where everything was cheaper, and where also I could, in case of danger, escape to Korata—Tedla informed me that we must be very careful, as there were plenty of gentlemen who live, not by their wits, but by their shields, in Furrus Wagga, and who, now that the country was absolutely without a judge, would of course be as busy as the devil in a gale of wind, and would be enchanted at the prospect of my journey to Bahar Dar. This being the case, at daylight, instead of proceeding to Devra Mai, we forthwith rendered ourselves at the church, and, sounding the bells of sanctuary, demanded an asylum of the priests. They told us that, until they could find a house for us, we might rest in the gateway of the church, to which a separate court was attached; removing thither, the report was soon spread, and in the evening we had plenty of bread, beer, &c. brought to us by the inhabitants.

Before cockcrow, we had loaded our two donkeys and saddled our horses, and no one had yet stirred when we crossed the little brook. Tedla guided us into a third road that I had not known before, and which took us, without any accident, by noon to Bahar Dar, to the intense surprise

of the inhabitants. They told us that we were very fortunate; that Bourro Hailo, the chief of Zeggy (who was, in point of fact, independent), had with a large force, after our departure, swept the roads in that direction, but had now proceeded, by sea (that is the lake), on a grand plundering expedition, leaving an officer at Bahar Dar to collect the duties of the passage of the Nile; that Damfo Welda Mariam had appeared with a large force, and the adherents of Hassamee Durrus were again dispersed in Achiferra; that the escaped prisoner, Fit-Aurari Goscho, was raising the country; that Bourro Abai, his cousin, was preparing to dispute it with him, and various others, ready to fight with anybody or everybody—to say nothing of small bodies of plunderers of the highway, the chief rendezvous of one set of whom was at my neighbour's house.

My friend of Korata, who had himself married the daughter of Dejaj Hailo, and was the son of a man of influence in Maycha, sent to beg me to cross the water, as it was impossible that a stranger should rest long at Maycha in safety, reputed as I was to possess dollars incalculable. I declined following the advice, but saw the necessity of being always on my guard. Fond of shooting, and unable to resist the pleasure of following the wild-boar and the deer in the wilderness of Salala, I took the precaution of being always accompanied by a man of the country—who, indeed, proved to me always a true friend—and at the same time never separating from my horse and my arms. Tedla also had influence among the marauders, who on several occasions, in fact, told me that they had watched me in such-and-such localities, unseen themselves, when in search of plunder. A small pistol, about five inches long, also served me as well as a six-pounder. My servants took it into the town, and were perpetually firing it, so that it was believed, and said, that we were walking magazines; and this, confirmed by

our apparent fearless pursuit of the chase, saved us from disagreeable quarrels.

For sport, Maycha is unsurpassed, even by Walkait. With the appearance of Lucifer, the morning star, lustrous as a young moon, on the dark and cloudless purple, proudly announcing to the yet glowing constellations the rising of Aurora, we would prick our way over the dew-laden plain; and surprising the wild-boar with the first gleam of daylight, far from his thicket lair, he would sometimes lead us a vain chase through copse and glade, amid herds of wild deer starting from their morning pasture—till, dashing headlong into the thick reeds that border the Nile, we would give breath to our panting steeds, and watch him swim the river, where we dared not follow; then, hallooing till my followers found me, I would take my gun, and seldom failed of securing one or more deer in the course of an hour.

These animals are just sufficiently timid to render sport pleasant, and without obliging you to walk two days for a shot, or to be content with two hours' sleep—making a pain of pleasure, after the approved fashion, I believe, of deer-stalking. On the fall of a *dufarsa* or *wombbo*—being as large as a small cow—it cannot be removed entire. The hide being scientifically flayed, the meat is roughly cut up, and loading the greater part on my mule's saddle, I could send it on with the escort; and then, taking the remainder to the nearest stream, we would demolish a leg or so (that I should say it!) while the fire was lighting, and then vary the amusement with morsels roasted on the embers, always having a supply of pepper and salt in the hollow cane of the *zenar*, the inseparable companion of the gun. The *zenar* consists of a leather case that straps round the waist, divided into twelve compartments, each lined with a hollow bamboo, in which you store powder, shot, ball, caps, wadding, &c., and flint and

steel and knife. Tweezers for extracting thorns, needles, thread, and other useful articles, may usually be found therein; the upper leather flaps over all, as a security from wet; and each bamboo has a lid, formed of hide, tied over the mouth in its soft fresh state, and suffered to dry into shape.

In returning, after bathing in the crystal brook, we would weary our horses in pursuit of innumerable game, and shoot the small deer called *faico*. I regretted much that I had no gun with which I could venture to attack the buffaloes that abound there, only one barrel of my gun admitting a ball, the other being rather dilapidated; and these animals are very strong and wicked—one, a short time before, having killed three men. The hide of a male is worth five or six dollars, and the horns have also some value. Elephants abound in the deeper parts of this wilderness, where I did not penetrate; but their tusks, I believe, are seldom large or valuable. We frequently found their traces.

One day, the whole town turning out for a grand fishing expedition, we accompanied them. There is a species of fruit called *burburruk*, growing in pods resembling beans, on a tree with leaves like the acacia; these beans are dried in the sun, and then beaten to powder in a large wooden bowl, with four or five thick sticks, smooth and round at the ends, and found in every Abyssinian domicile; they are so hard, that the labour of grinding them is very severe, and on taking stock, each one contributing what he had pounded, we found there was only six *madagas* or bushels. This powder, when thrown into a running stream, poisons (or rather intoxicates) all the fish for some distance—according to the quantity—and this sport is a favourite amusement with the chieftains.

Selecting the spot, after some discussion, we proceeded

to the Nile, which was to be the sufferer on this occasion; and the powder was cast into the stream at a narrow rapid, issuing into a broad current below. Some parts of this were shallow, others deep; and here, man and boy, wading into the water, took their stand. Happy those who had nets, resembling landing-nets; for, in about a minute, the fish began to flash up to the surface, and, lying lazily gasping for a few seconds, slid rapidly away, evidently 'merry.' Some ran on shore of themselves; others were struck on the head with a stick, as they glanced upwards, and were captured in cloths or trousers, or anything at hand. Shouting, struggling with each other for the fish—that now were turning up their white bellies in such numbers as to render selection difficult—the noise and laughter were stunning.

I sate on the bank enjoying the sight, and those supposed to be 'old men' followed my example for some time, or contented themselves with knocking one or two on the head near the edge; but, presently getting excited, they stripped also, and were soon as busy and as noisy as the rest. We were, I suppose, a thousand or more; and after a little quarrel with the inhabitants of the opposite bank, who had carried away some fine large fish that had gone over to the other side, we returned, well laden with the finny race. There was one black fish, called *ambaza*, that is wary even in its drunkenness, and will not be caught: glancing up for an instant, it rapidly disappears, and serves only to distract the attention of the ignorant: it is found also in the lake, where the Wytos spear them, as they dart about the rocks, eating the small fry. It is quite black, about two or three feet long, and in appearance and teeth somewhat resembles a young shark: they are very voracious, and the raw flesh is said by some to be excellent eating.

Some days after the fishing, the Wytos, whom I always

patronised—buying whip-handles of hippopotamus-hide or guinea-fowl from them—came to beg me to give the *coup-de-grâce*, with a bullet, to a hippopotamus that had been wounded by them three days previously, and who, they stated, was sure to die the next day; but as it was possible he might go a long distance, and give them much trouble in watching him during the night, they were anxious to secure him as soon as possible: indeed, the fellow seemed in very low case, and said the whole village of Wytos was starving, not having killed a hippopotamus for upwards of a month. Taking my gun, I found it impossible to keep off the crowd of idlers that rushed forth, to look either at the gun, the hippopotamus, or myself; and he was frightened away from the spot where he had been lying, very sick, near the shore, before I could arrive. Getting into, or rather astride, of a small *tonkwa*, with the Wyto, we sculled to a small rock in the bay, where I lay quiet, the Wyto pushing the *tonkwa* into a crevice of the stones. Presently the head came out of water close to us, evidently making for the rock, as I had expected, being too weak to swim long. As his huge broad forehead rose again within ten paces, I fired; but owing to the waves, as there was a fresh breeze, or the sight of a crowd standing exactly opposite the muzzle of my gun, or my want of skill, or all three, I missed him; and though the ball, fortunately, passed over the heads of the people, the animal was lost for the present, and the Wyto would have rent his hair if he had any, but being shorn, contented himself with philosophically spearing an *ambaza*, and paddling me on shore.

In an hour or two he ran to me again, breathless, and carried me off to the same hippopotamus, lying in the *demgel* close to the shore. Creeping quietly through the long reeds, I succeeded in approaching him unheard, and this time the bullet had evidently struck him

somewhere. He was lying like a huge black rock, his carcase half out of water at times, at others sinking slowly down (as he respired, I presume), and his small eyes evidently fast closing on this sublunary world, with a look of giant strength, struggling in vain with the cold poison that was numbing his huge frame, and of pious resignation such as a wounded behemoth can alone be supposed to exhibit; when, feeling himself pricked, I suppose, by the ball, he shook off for an instant the lethargy of death, and dashed the waters into an angry whirlpool for a short space, as though in desperate triumph he would again seek his native deeps. Vain was the effort! and again, heavily and sullenly, did he make for some restingplace for his weary limbs. Thus harassed and tormented by his indefatigable foes, by land and water—who contrived to add two wounds in the course of the night—at daylight he was found dead, near the spot where I had wounded him, and, proceeding to sketch the monster, I found the Wytos with their knives hard at work, like sharks around a whale carcase. My bullet had struck him about four inches behind the ear, but such is the thickness of the hide and neck, that the lead was found flattened against the inner skin; had I wounded him within an inch of the ear, immediate death would have ensued. The two spear-heads of the preceding night were first found, and further in, five or six poisoned knives, the effect of which was visible in the blue and corroded heart and liver, though the meat was perfectly sound. His hide was cut almost into strips, by long wounds of an inch in depth, inflicted by the rest of the herd, who remorselessly chase a wounded companion into solitude.

I left the Wytos to their repast, as I had heard they did not like strangers to be present. The spear they use is so made, that the head may break off and remain

in the animal, being loosely fastened to the shaft and lanced right in the air, so that it falls usually into the back, nearly upright; the poison is made from some herbs known only to themselves, boiled in water, in which the iron is dipped. The hide forms whip-handles, and bridles for horses and mules, neatly plaited by the Wytos.

The sixty days' fast soon passed away, to me agreeably, as I did not fast; and having given a feast to my friends, and constructed a house sufficient for myself and my three beasts, as the rains had already commenced here, and in the neighbourhood of the lakes generally, I began to feel time heavy on my hands, as one cannot hunt and shoot incessantly. I had no means for preserving a collection, nor drawing materials, and even the intellectual amusements of *gittee* and *guvoota* pall upon the soul. Besides, the prospect of spending the rains upon nothing a day, and supporting not only myself, but a race of hungry scamps, was becoming possible; and I, with my usual foresight on these points, was living on the fat of the land, exactly as if it were impossible. My head-servant, indeed, on being informed by me that the sum-total of my funds amounted to six dollars, strongly advised a handsome retaining-fee to Tedla, as an experienced and valuable acquisition, in case of our taking to the road, when again news, that had been some time nearly stagnant, became brisk.

We had previously heard that Bourro Abai and his cousin had fought a pitched battle, in which both sides, according to the veracious informants, had been defeated. It was now said that the Ras, not finding Bourroo Goscho in Gojam, had campaigned into the country of the Wallo Gallas in pursuit of him, as it was certain that he had not entered his mountain; and from Korata the report was that Bourroo, having evaded the Ras, was carrying fire and

sword through Semada, the Queen narrowly escaping by a rapid flight to Gondar, and the Ras's chiefs not daring to encounter him. Bourro Hailo the same day appeared in the town with a large force, that was billeted on the inhabitants; and Tedla, with those marauders that lodged in our neighbourhood, escaped in haste to the church, being, as usual, at feud with the said chief.

I had been introduced to Bourro Hailo in the evening, and could scarcely believe the accounts I had heard of his unsparing cruelty and fierce courage. He was very dark, almost black, with a countenance of nearly perfect beauty —in fact, a smiling youth, the down of whose beard had not yet made its appearance, teeth like snow, and the neck of a black Apollo. On close examination, an occasional glance of the eye, and a slight remark—which hardly interrupted the smile that played on his lips, but had something peculiar in it—as well as the powerful build of his frame, betrayed the tiger. I left him with the impression that I would rather be his friend than his enemy. There had been several competitors of his family for the chieftainship of Zeggy, but Bourro Hailo, becoming the favourite of the soldiery by his daring exploits, had overcome them all, and was said to be the best horseman and thrower of the lance in the country. I wished much to have seen Zeggy; but having no present to make him that would ensure his protection, and having heard that he had an unpleasant habit of tying wealthy persons for the sake of ransom, I deferred my visit.

The next morning he went off on a kind of blackmail-levying expedition, and shortly the news we had heard was confirmed—that the Fit-Aurari, Gabro Yesoos, had left Bourroo Goscho in Begemder, and crossed by Agitta, the soldiers of Maycha being home-sick, and refusing to serve any longer. My friend Uskwald immediately started to pay his court, and I sent a boy with

him to see if the report was true, and salute him. The third day they returned, and said they had found the Fit-Aurari bathing in the hot springs near Agitta, having dismissed his army, and that he had requested I should come to him, in a week or so, at his old camp; that Bourroo Goscho had burnt the Ras's house and town at Devra Tabor; that his further intentions were uncertain, and that the Ras was either in the Wallo or the Borona Galla country, having been misled by Bourroo; and that Gojam, Damot, Agaumiddur, and now Maycha, were thus still in the hands of Bourroo's adherents.

Accordingly, in a few days, I started for the eternal Furrus Wagga, after giving out, as usual, a report that I was about to visit Korata, and taking the precaution of leaving a little before the peep of dawn, and, travelling in perfect silence, we kept the lads at a smart trot. The first specimen of animal life that presented itself was a little *faico*, and I paused for a minute to gaze on the figure, starting from a green bank, where he had slept under a little sheltering bower and drooping foliage. He stood motionless as death, but lightly, as though his tiny feet were rather on the grass-tops than on the earth; the first streak of dawn, clear and placid, with the foliage behind him, brightly defined his sylphlike form, so that he looked like breathing silver moulded by sportive wood-nymphs, an offering to Diana. Surely it was the unwonted sigh that escaped me which freed the lovely statue from its spell, when he disappeared in the thicket, leaving no trace, as where stern reality closes and obliterates some young dream of life.

There are some who will feel the wanderer's sigh, and the rest may accompany me to the presence of the Fit-Aurari, occupied in the unsentimental task of swallowing copious draughts of mead, out of jars that the dauntless Harold would not have despised, if emptied

into a wassail-bowl. Eating and drinking is the business of life in Abyssinia; and if you enter when your friends are not eating and drinking, the only difference is that they make you go through that refreshing process with yourself—excellent company, no doubt; but when two hundred optics, belonging to the owners of perfectly satisfied stomachs, are gazing on the aforesaid process, you are ashamed to be hungry, and the ordeal is too severe to be amusing. The Fit-Aurari, having overcome my natural bashfulness, forced me to salute him after the manner of our interesting Galla neighbours, quite an 'Orestes-and-Pylades' kind of operation, no doubt; but I do humbly submit that lips were made for more tender encounters than with rough and unshorn beards, however friendly may be their owners; and when the said owner is of the colour of a respectable chimney-sweep on weekdays, the sweetness of the thing is not enhanced. But I forgot the colour, and could almost forgive the kiss of one who proved so kind to me, and I will add (rare virtue indeed in Abyssinia!) so disinterested. I found him at Devra Mai, in his house, with but few followers; he begged me to stay a few days with him, and sent my servants to Furrus Wagga to be billeted there, or rather to billet themselves. I bestowed myself, with my shield-bearer, as I best could, in a very small hut belonging to his *Ikka Bayt*; and then struck up an immediate and intimate friendship with divers bigheaded boys, followers of the *Ikka Bayt*, playing chess and *quvoota* with them with much energy.

The Fit-Aurari, wisely aware of the uncertainty of human life in general, and of his own property in particular, ordered his mule and horse at daylight every morning, where they stood till dark, ready for immediate use; and forthwith commenced a perpetual *adirash*, or banquet, that lasted, with more or less vigour, during a

week, as if he was determined, at least, to leave no honey for his foes. In spite of the hyænas, here said to be dangerous (indeed, the mountain of Abola, the renowned residence of the Bouddha King, is near), the fleas, as usual when I had no couch, drove me to sleep outside—myself and servant (whom let me hand down to immortality by the name of Negoosee) keeping watch and ward alternately. On offering my sword as a present to the Fit-Aurari, he would not accept of it, saying that I could not afford it now; that it was his duty to be my friend, and not to take my property; and gave me two beasts, an ox and a cow, as all he could then spare, bidding me kill them for my present wants, and promising, wherever he might be as a *schifta*, to send me supplies to Bahar Dar from time to time, as he found opportunity. With that I received my *congé*.

The arrival of Dejaj Wallee, who was now said to have received the government of Maycha, was expected daily—news that had made Tedla invoke the spirit of his father with pious fervour to confirm its truth, as the new governor was the one friend that was still left him. Leaving the town amid the disconsolate adieus of my young friends, whom I had conciliated by divers small gifts, I collected my ragamuffins at Furrus, where they seemed to have found the sojourn very agreeable. At least the horses would not be caught for several hours; and some dark nymphs, with the dream of a tear just fringing their eyelids, as they looked farewell, made me think that they had rendered the stay too charming. An Abyssinian heart being, however, like a lodging, always 'to let,' we proceeded merrily over our old road. It was now June, and the rivers of Gojam already nearly full.

The next day a servant arrived from Gojam, having passed with difficulty, who informed me that the Ras had returned from the Wallo country, that Bourroo had

entered his mountain stronghold, that my companion was at Yawish, and that Dejaj Wallee had received the province of Maycha, but dared not yet cross till supported by some chief in Damot. I determined, at all risks—and in spite of the entreaties of my friends, who represented that the road was impassable—to reach Yawish, and thence to pass, if practicable, into the Galla country, before the filling of the Nile, which was still passable for three weeks; and giving the ox to a servant whom I was obliged to leave behind me, and the cow to a townsman who had done me some little service, I finally quitted Bahar Dar the next morning, in company with Mercha Adero, the only man in Maycha of reputation for honesty (that is, for never having followed the profession of public robbery), and who was much respected.

VISIT TO THE GALLA COUNTRY.

LEAVE BASSO—CROSSING THE NILE—ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY—COSTUME OF THE PEOPLE—SUSPICIONS—ALEMANNOO DILLOO—THE CHIEFS OF GOODROO—COMPULSORY ALLIANCE—GALLA CUSTOMS.

In the month of June, 1845, by a rapid and dangerous journey of six days, I joined my companion, Mr. Bell, who was residing at Yawish, in the neighbourhood of Basso, a great market in the south of Christian Abyssinia, frequented by the Gallas, and separated from the Galla district of Goodroo by the valley of the Nile, which is here a large river, impassable during the rainy season—that is, for some five months, between July and February.

An Abyssinian chief escorts the traders, every Saturday, with an armed force, to the banks of the river; and at that time, this chief of Basso was a man related to, and with great influence amongst, the chiefs of Goodroo.

On my arrival at Basso, Bell informed me that M. Antoine d'Abbadie had crossed the Nile a month or two previously, and that the above-mentioned chief had offered to assist us in our intended journey; that in three days there would be the last opportunity for crossing the Nile this season, and we found that if we remained in Abyssinia during the rains, our little remaining stock of money would be exhausted, and we should then be unable to proceed. Further, I learnt that a large caravan of merchants had crossed the previous week, whom Bell had arranged to join on the southern frontier of Goodroo—that

being a friendly district, which we apprehended little difficulty in traversing.

I approved of these arrangements, and furthermore, to conciliate the chief of Basso, I presented him with a matchlock and a turban. He swore to send us in safety to Enarea, and introduced us to a Galla named Govala, with whom we were bound in friendship by the usual formula, esteemed sacred, and who, the chief said, would place us in safety in the hands of the caravan abovementioned.

We agreed to leave all our guns but two, required for our own use as a protection from wild beasts, and for procuring specimens of birds, as we had already done throughout Abyssinia, and also for the influence our skill in shooting might obtain for us, as was the case with Bruce.

However, till we saw and knew more of the country we were about to visit, we determined to pack the guns, with the rest of our things, on the mules, a fact which the chief of Basso (whom we confided in) alone knew; he said, indeed, that there was no necessity for concealment, that all the large caravans carried firearms (which is true), and that ours would be an additional protection; he then pressed us to take more if we had them, which we objected to, and he finally ended by promising secresy, as we wished it.

Quitting at daylight the house of Tokoorsha Welda Mariam, a few hundred yards brought us to the edge of the noble and fertile plains that compose the province of Gojam; and suddenly we beheld, stretching far as the eye could reach on either side, the wild and sombre valley, through whose depths the Nile cleaves its impetuous course, receiving numberless tributaries, till it issues, in calm and solitary majesty, to fertilise the burning soil of Sennaar and Egypt.

Looking downwards, first an abrupt rock, and then a

more gradual declivity, meet the eye, till, far below, the forest-covered hills appear but a misty plain, through the centre of which a line of fleecy clouds, lazily curling, marked the narrow and precipitous ravine, descending a thousand feet to the rocky bed of the river.

On the other side, a similar expanse of undulating ridges rose at once, at some eight miles' distance, into the bold ranges of the Gallas, purple, and well-defined in the clear atmosphere, their broad tops marked freely against the sky, at nearly the same level as that on which we were standing. Sunrise added its charm, and while the mountains threw masses of shade, or stood revealed in the sunshine, quick lights and shadows flitted in endless variety over the gulf beneath, forming a scene at once noble and peculiar.

The first descent of a few hundred feet was precipitous, and occasioned some delay with the beasts of burden, after which, mounting our mules, we rode down a well-cultivated slope, spearmen, in knots of five or six to twenty, joining us every now and then; so that at a large tree, where is the first general rendezvous, what with merchants, Gallas, market-people, and soldiers, we numbered some thousands. We proceeded now in more order; the fighting-men girded their loins, and kept in a compact body in the rear of all; and having passed the cultivated lands, on entering the boundless waste of thorns and grass jungle, where roam only the elephant and the lion, or the wilder plunderer or hunter, scouting-parties threw themselves out to some distance on each side of the road. At the brow of each fresh descent, twenty or thirty, advancing in front of all, would throw themselves flat, and keenly examine the jungle below them. Presently were found marks of a struggle, and blood, where some one had apparently been dragged from the road into the bushes that same morning; the trace, however, was soon lost, and

we pressed on, the heat of the sun having become unpleasant.

At about eleven o'clock we had reached the brink of the ravine, though, owing to its steepness and thick woods, the river was not yet in sight—having passed Kut Amora, the scene of many a combat, without attack. Here the Gallas from the opposite bank yearly kill many, lying in ambush in great numbers, both horse and foot, though it is ground where nothing but a Galla and his horse would venture beyond a walk. A few minutes sufficed to reach the bottom of the precipitous road to the river's bank, already swarming with life—the river dotted with Gallas floating their goods over to the market in inflated hides, shouting and screaming in a strange language, whose echo rebounded from the rocks, that, rising almost perpendicularly above, fiercely reflected the heat of the noonday sun. The Nile rolled rapidly and calmly through its narrow bed, even here a deep and noble river. We had descended, in a few hours, from the climate of Italy to that of Bengal; and though somewhat relieved by the wind, that swept down in strong gusts, the sand and stones were almost insupportable to our feet. Shade there was none, but the scene, so strange and novel, checked all thought of discomfort. The Gallas were for the most part naked, and a finer-looking race of men than their neighbours.

The uproar of the market, with the reverberation of the place, rendered hearing difficult; and it was some time before the crossing of our goods and beasts was commenced, under the auspices of our guide and his brother, who swam over to meet him. We had been cautioned against the thieving propensities of the Gallas of the valley, but, in spite of our efforts to be careful, we found, on inspection in the evening, that we had lost a sword and a box of medicines—all, in fact, that we had.

Towards evening, our guide and his brother, having told us that, on account of a blood-feud, they dared not land at the usual spot, proceeded higher up the river, and, tying their cloths on their heads, were received on the other bank by their friends, who brought them their arms.

When everything was safe over, we hastened to cross, as the alligators were said to be dangerous after sunset—indeed, we saw one just as we entered the water. We had been informed, on the road, that after having been subdued by a medicine-man, they had, on his death, begun to bite again; however, we got over in safety, though the current, running about seven miles an hour, took us a considerable distance down. We laid our sleeping-skins on the sand, lighted a large fire, and made bread, consisting of a certain quantity of dough, wrapped round a stone previously made red-hot, and then thrust into the fire. The night was dark, and somewhat stormy.

The Gallas continued swimming over sheep long after nightfall, some with torches in their hands, their companions throwing in large stones along the banks, and shouting to frighten away the crocodiles. The market-people, and the force that accompanied us down, slept on the Amhara side of the river, and we were as much in a new world as if we had crossed the Atlantic, instead of that narrow strip of water. In an hour or two the hum of voices ceased; some few dark figures might be seen by the watch-fires; the wind lulled, and the stars shone clear into the ravine, and over the rapid stream that, too dark and troubled to reflect them, rolled hoarsely along. Sleepless as I was, the sound of rushing water, then, and then only, struck powerfully on my ear, and with an ill-omened murmur. My heart was sad and heavy, and that night I in vain sought relief and forgetfulness in slumber.

The Nile filled in this week, and all communication

with the Abyssinian bank was completely intercepted for some months.

At daylight, with a small party of Gallas, we commenced our ascent, which was at first steep, as on the Gojam side, and afterwards more open and gradual. An alarm was raised of an attack by the Kootlai Gallas, that caused us to snatch up our shields, but it proved false. Presently we were stopped by a party of Gallas, with whom our guide, and apparent friend, Govala Lagas, had a long and stormy discussion. Seated under a large tree resembling an oak, I caught occasionally the word *coway*, or gun, which raised some suspicions in my mind; these, however, I suppressed, as return was now impracticable, and fear useless.

We were then allowed to proceed, and having arrived at the level country, towards evening, I was agreeably surprised at the fertile, and even English, aspect of the scene. The beehive-shaped huts, though small, neat in construction, with each its grass-plot before the door; the well-marked divisions of the cultivated ground; the grass-plains, with here and there a small clump of trees (not thorns, as in Abyssinia), or the magnificent *berbeesa* alone, with its wide shade and graceful foliage; horses feeding tranquilly, with here and there a manly-looking Galla, peacefully conversing, leaning on his spear—all accorded little with the bloodthirsty character, and the constant and ferocious warfare, ascribed to the Gallas by common report. How these contradictions are reconciled will be seen hereafter.

Now enter we the house of Govala Lagas, our worthy guide. The circular hut, thickly covered with straw, and having a second wall within, was so dark, that the hand of our host was necessary to guide us to a seat, and it was some time before we could see from what quarter the salutations of his wife proceeded. A cheerful fire being

lighted dispelled the gloom, and I may here slightly describe the costume of our new friends. The thick cotton cloth, spun by the women, and woven by the handloom, is the universal fabric in use, ornamented by pieces of blue Indian stuff, cut in various shapes and inserted; red is no favourite colour among them, strange to say. The man wears a piece of the cloth thus ornamented, which falls to his knees like a kilt, and is twisted into the string called the *goordah*, worn by every Galla round his loins. A belt of some ten feet in length, of the same material, is wound round his waist, which supports the *gooddo* or knife, curved, with a double edge, usually about fifteen or eighteen inches long, and with a handle, sometimes of wood, at others handsomely worked in brass or ivory, or both mixed. Over his shoulders, in peaceful times, is thrown a large and strong cloth, which envelopes the whole person: in battle this is left at home, and he mounts his horse either bare from the waist upwards, or with the skin of some animal thrown over his shoulders.

The black panther, the leopard, &c. furnish their spoils for these occasions. If the Gallà be a man of courage, and successful in destroying his foes, he usually has, on his forearm, rings of brass, more or less numerous; if an elephant has succumbed to his prowess, he wears on the upper arm two or three large and thick rings of ivory, which I imagine nothing but long habit can render endurable. If a man of wealth, he has usually round his neck the interior or stomach-fat of some beast fresh-killed—goat, sheep, or ox. The hair is worn frizzled, of various lengths, and, if the owner has slain an enemy lately, usually streaming with fresh butter; this, with the long and broad-bladed lance, that might have graced the arm of one of Homer's heroes, and the round convex shield of buffalo-hide (rarely laid aside, save in the house), is the

costume that adorns the generally sinewy and manly frame of the republican Galla.

The women wear a skirt studiously ornamented, and fringed with the blue cloth, and by way of petticoat, a hide, by butter and assiduity rendered as soft as velvet; this is ornamented with broken beads of various colours, tastefully sewn in round the skirt, and being arranged so as to fall in graceful folds, it exceedingly becomes a good figure. Virgins, or girls that have not openly espoused, mostly wear only this skin, and no skirt, they being also distinguished by the skin being fringed. The women, according to the wealth of their husbands, also wear rows of beads round the loins, sometimes as many as fourteen or fifteen, and three or four of a more precious kind round the neck. They also wear large and massive ivory rings on the arms and ankles; on the latter, also, silver bangles, and in the hair a species of ivory comb, inlaid with black wood. The hair is tressed by winding it dexterously round a straw, each ringlet of that thickness, and falling equally from the centre all round—those over the forehead being cut, so as to reach the eyebrows; butter is used in amazing quantities, not only on the head, but over the whole person. Instances of extreme female beauty are rare, but in feature many are quite European, and their general appearance is pleasing and attractive, aided also by a soft language, and usually a gentle voice.

Our supper was now brought, in a large wooden bowl with a circular stand, all carved out of a single piece of wood, and consisted of the *teph* bread, made about an inch in thickness, and curds mixed with a small hot pepper resembling cayenne, ground fine. Our servants received beans, boiled or roasted, and the *nook* (from which oil is extracted in Abyssinia), also roasted. We were then treated with a jar of beer, thick, and resembling a paste,

with which water is mixed as often as required: the taste is somewhat like that of cider. We drank from horns, which are filled up by the domestic, or by your host, while in your hand, until you signify satiety by returning it nearly full. This ceremony over, we all retired to sleep in a separate hut.

We were anxious to get on, for better or worse; but our host, the next morning, said that was impossible, as Alemannoo Dilloo, the son-in-law of Tokoorsha Welda Mariam, was absent from his house, which we could see about a mile distant, and in the meantime he gave us a sheep. In three or four days, becoming impatient, we signified again our wish to proceed at all hazards, to which he acquiesced, and we started. We had proceeded about half a mile across the grass plain, when a Galla, mounted on horseback, suddenly appeared, and drove back our donkeys with the butt-end of his lance; we felt inclined to resist, but our host, pretending to be much disconcerted, told us, through our interpreter, that this was our fault in not waiting for Alemannoo Dilloo, and that we must pay tribute to this man on passing over his land. We told him to arrange the amount, which—after much noise, in which the word *coway* was again heard—was settled at three pieces of blue stuff; this we paid and went on, more and more convinced that some treachery was at work.

We then proceeded half a mile farther, when he took us to a house, where he said he was directed to leave us till Alemannoo Dilloo came, and that this was the residence of a *Fokera* or Mussulman dervish, by birth an Abyssinian, but by long residence a Galla. This individual, old, scrofulous, and nasty in every way, received us, however, kindly, gave us a house (in which we were half-starved with cold and hunger), and the benefit of his conversation, which, though somewhat wandering, was curious and entertaining.

Upon deliberation, we determined to trust this man, and to leave our guns in deposit with him, secretly, which he, having sworn to be true, accepted, and placed them under his couch, which he never left. We also, finding our servants too many, sent four of them to Govala Lagas, to reconduct them across the Nile. On the Monday afternoon, we heard that two of them had crossed in safety, but that two others, with the accompanying Galla, had been carried away by the river and lost. Whilst we were grieving for their death, on Tuesday afternoon, to our surprise, they walked into the *Fokera's* house, and thus related their escape :—

The river was much swollen, and, tied to the usual *korbutta*, or inflated bag, they entered it with two Gallas, one pulling and the other pushing. About halfway across, finding that the stream was fast carrying them down, the Galla who pulled, being frightened, suddenly left them, and made his way back. Afraid that the other would also leave them to their fate, they clasped him round the body, so that it was impossible for him to swim. Their fright was so great, that it was long before his efforts to reassure them could induce them to let go their hold, and by this time they were out of sight of all the landing-places, and were being hurried down by the current between steep and rocky banks. The Galla did not lose heart, and after being swept along an hour or two, during which he kept pushing them gradually towards the Galla bank of the river, they found a somewhat sloping spot, where he succeeded, though with some difficulty, in landing them, having escaped not only the danger of the river, but of the numerous crocodiles that infest it. Having landed in the province of Horro, they were obliged to go silently and carefully through the forest, for fear of inimical Gallas ; and finally, wearied and wet, they arrived, after dark, at the house of their conductor, who treated

them well, and the next morning guided them to our abode.

In the afternoon arrived the long-expected Alemannoo, a tall powerful Galla, with a hooked nose, a piercing eye, and a frank cheerful countenance, with manners that went far to reassure us. He took us to one of his houses close by, to pass the night of Wednesday, and the next morning, under his guidance, we proceeded on our journey towards the frontier of Goodroo.

As we journeyed on, our new guide seemed to set aside all obstructions, and though, at each door of the well-populated district, an attempt was made to stop us, it subsided after a short parley.

The cheerful aspect of the noble country we were traversing, dotted with cattle and horses; the sun glittering on the green verdure, wet with rain-drops; the slight undulations, adorned with majestic trees; the complete cultivation, and the pure exhilarating air of an Italian spring, all combined to charm; while birds of Oriental magnificence of plumage—the golden-crested crane, enormous herons with scarlet beaks and snowy breasts, and eagles of several kinds—added lustre to the scene. The many signs of nature's extremest bounty, not unaided by man's industry, made me forget all uneasiness; and chattering in broken Galla with our guide, or practising the *jereed*, the day's journey seemed short that brought us to our guide's principal residence. Here we were received by his two wives, in all the lustre of beads and butter-dripping ringlets; and we were soon, with the aid of a fat sheep and some good mead, making ourselves as comfortable as human nature, youth, and our circumstances could well permit.

The trunks of young elephants, the spoils of buffaloes and other beasts, vanquished by the vigorous arm of Alemannoo, were hung round the apartment. Through the

interpreter, he recited his feats, and then asked us to fire a gun in his grounds for good-fortune. When we assured him we had none, he said nothing, but looked incredulously at our interpreter. I now began, pretty clearly, to guess at the whole scheme, and the perfidy of Tokoorsha; but, as there was no remedy, I dismissed my apprehensions.

We remained a day or so till, as our host said, he could send to the sons of Dookee, the late illustrious chief of Goodroo, who were then engaged in the constant and unceasing pursuit of warfare with Jimma—a name that I only now began to hear, but which was well dinned into my recollection afterwards. To avoid repetition, I shall briefly say that we arrived at the hut of the said sons of Dookee, and found them engaged in feasting the chiefs of the Abyssinian caravan for Enarea, which caravan we had calculated on joining here, and accompanying into the interior. It was written otherwise, as will be seen; and, as usual, in the apparent moment of success, all the plans formed with our short human foresight were crushed.

We were called into the hut; the celebrated chiefs—two brothers, tall handsome men, with countenances somewhat furrowed by care, and imposing manners—were slightly under the influence of mead, but received us politely; the merchants were undeniably drunk, and singing or howling Galla songs furiously. The chiefs informed us that Jimma had burnt their houses, on the frontier, in their absence, and that they had in consequence denied butter to their heads, and were in severest woe; that now, however, as we had come with our guns, all was joy, and we should soon show the hyæna, Jimma, our strength. We denied having any guns, at which they smiled, and said we would talk further in the evening.

Soon weary of the scene of revelry, we left the hut, and

seated ourselves on a grass-plot, under a large *berbeesa*, and had a conversation with Alemannoo, who now did a tale unfold. He told us that it was well known that we had expressly agreed with Tokoorsha Welda Mariam, to assist his friends of Goodroo against the assaults of Jimma, who had carried fire and slaughter through their territory; that we had now only to confirm their expectations, and the government of Goodroo was ours. I now saw clearly how affairs would finally be, but declared our intention of peaceably proceeding with the caravan to Enarea.

In a short time, Goolama and Kustee, the sons of Dookee, came out, and spoke still more plainly. When we told them that they were risking a quarrel with Welda Mariam, they laughed, and said that he had sent expressly to tell them never to allow us to pass Kobbo, the district we were now in; that we had three guns with us, with which we should enable them to conquer Jimma, and that we had left those guns in the *Fokera's* house (this we owed to our interpreter); that now we must bring them and become their allies, in which case all should be at our feet; and that as to our proceeding with the caravan, they would plunder any merchant who should dare to permit us to accompany him. All my arguments in answer it is needless to recapitulate; they met them all, by saying that they were desperate men, whose homes, families, and country would be surely destroyed during the rains, without our assistance, and that what might happen afterwards they neither knew nor cared: suffice it to say that we parted in high dudgeon. By Alemannoo's interference, at dark, they put us into an empty and nearly roofless house, and sent us a few loaves of bread for supper, without wood for fire, or candle; the ground for our bed, and the rain pouring on us, we passed the night, and, for my own part, my sleep was tolerably sound.

If the days previous had been brilliant as our vanished

hopes, the next morning was cheerless as our situation. A drizzling rain with thick fog, our beasts debarred from grass, ourselves without food, the melancholy countenances of our Abyssinians (who were evidently prepared for death or slavery), formed altogether a dreary spectacle. Armed for the worst, and resolved not to yield without an effort, we found means to hold a conversation with one of the chiefs of the caravan. He said, his sincere advice was to accept the terms of the Goodroo chiefs, and thus to save our lives and property; he argued that it was better to do so with a good grace, and become their masters, than to be forced into it by the prospect of starvation. He assured us that they themselves had, during the last night, made the greatest efforts to induce Goolama to allow us to proceed; that, in fact, they persisted, and offered money and goods, till they were silenced by violent threats, and prohibited from even seeing us; and were ordered to proceed on their route the next morning, Goolama himself guarding them to the frontiers of Jimma, that we might not meet. Our worst point was that our interpreter was in the interests of the Gallas, and we knew scarcely two words of the language. This was an error on our part, but, in truth, we were hurried into crossing from the low condition of our funds, as, had we passed the rains in Gojam, we should have had nothing left to carry us on.

The caravan passed on, and we heard no more for some days; our beasts were dying of hunger, our servants ditto; we were prohibited the market, and perishing of cold and wet. The sons of Dookee, with other Gallas, then began again to persecute us to bring our guns—now by entreaties, now by threats—while our servants begged us not to allow them to be starved. Overcome, and having also one scheme in reserve, I agreed at last to fetch them, Bell remaining behind, and sundry agreements for food and fire, &c. being entered into. This, however, did not come to pass

till after some stormy discussions. On one occasion we had given the word for return, but were told that each step was at the peril of our lives. This was calmed by our friend Alemannoo.

I returned with all expedition to the Fokera's house, and took my guns—one single-barrelled and the other double-barrelled, with a hammer of Abyssinian workmanship that frequently missed fire, a matchlock, destined as a present—and what little powder, lead, and caps I had. On my return, one of the principal men in Goodroo, named Shoomee Maycha, rich and powerful, had engaged me to visit him, which I accordingly did, much against the wish of Alemannoo. We feasted with him, and I had afterwards a private interview, using as interpreter a slave who spoke Amharic.

I explained how matters stood, and showed him that little good could accrue to Goodroo from our assistance, and much harm might, on our death or return to the Amhara country. I promised him, then, if he would take us under his protection, and allow us to pass the rains quietly in his house, to give him the guns, and 100 dollars, or their equivalent, on the opening of the Nile, and to procure him the friendship of the chiefs of Gojam and Damot—in the meantime, also, such presents as we then had with us. He said that he was coming in three or four days to the frontier, and would then arrange with the sons of Dookee to place us with him, told me to be of good heart, and sent us away. I placed little faith in his promises, and may as well here mention, that we saw and heard nothing of him for about two months.

I then gratified the heart of Alemannoo Dilloo by killing a guinea-fowl for him; and rejoining Bell at Kobbo, found he had been well treated in my absence, and was received with great joy by the sons of Dookee and other Galla heroes.

They brought honey and corn, oxen and sheep; they offered us this as tribute, and certain rights on firewood, &c., in the markets; also portions of the meadow below, for our animals. Horses were immediately looked for; and, in fact, seeing that circumstances were too powerful for me, and entreated on all sides, I reflected that it was at least better to lead the movement I could not stem, and we struck up a firm and lasting alliance with the potentates of Goodroo against all foes. As I still thought it possible that Jimma might not disturb us, the conditions were for defensive war.

We then sent a message to Jimma, to inform them of our case, of our intention to return to Gojam after the rains, and our resolution only to act on the defensive, recommending them to select other points for their attacks.

The Gallas brought us horses to try, but as we did not like them they were returned; and we amused ourselves by shooting specimens of ornithology, and forming the most friendly intimacies with the different Gallas of note, receiving constant invitations. My mind being once made up on the subject, I was tranquil, though little expecting ever to return with life; being persuaded, from the dread entertained of the name of Jimma, that, on our first encounter, every Galla ally would vanish.

The sons of Dookee were, as I have mentioned, two; and of these, Goolama, the eldest, possessed three wives, and the younger, Kustee, two—the Galla custom being that every man shall marry as many wives as he can afford to keep, and shall give to each a certain number of rows of beads, and a separate house, cows, &c. Each wife in turn, in her own house, prepares her husband's breakfast, supper, mead, and butter; she also brings water for washing his feet, the most indispensable of all, and prepares his bed, and, if the cry of war arises, she saddles his horse for him, while he puts on his belt and knife.

With these dames we became intimate, and they constantly brought us presents of milk and butter, we in return giving them beads or other trifles they liked. Their virtue was far from being of the strictest, and had we been capable of abusing the confidence of their husbands, or rather had we adopted the Galla view of the case, in which the only fault is in being discovered, we should have found no obstacles.

If the morality of Abyssinia be far from strict on these points, the Gallas of Goodroo (I will not say all Gallas, not being *quite* sure) are still more free, both married and unmarried. The married women do not even strive to conceal their actions from any but their husbands. The wives of our friends would frequently inform us of their assignations with others, looking on it as a matter of course that we could not think of informing their husbands; and frequently the lover would walk in, during the absence of the husband, in presence of slaves and servants of all classes, who would scarcely even observe him. Every Galla husband is well aware in his heart that he is thus abused, but, as long as his own eyes do not witness the injury, he is careless enough about it—the more so as he has, probably, half-a-dozen affairs of the same kind on hand, with the wives or daughters of his neighbours.

The omens of the Gallas are almost entirely confined to the examination of the stomachs of slaughtered oxen and sheep. They stretch out the layer of fat, or membrane, and examine carefully the numerous lines that intersect it. Here Jimma and Goodroo will fight; here there is one corpse, there ten. On the day when an unlucky *mora*, as this membrane is called by them, is found, nothing can induce the owner to stir in the warlike way, though perhaps a brave man. I found one exception to this rule in Goodroo, in an adopted son of Dookee named Arro, who always fought whenever an opportunity

offered, and always pined when there was a day without one; he was acknowledged to be the 'bravest of the brave.' On a day of battle, before mounting their horses, they frequently slay several oxen; and the brave Dookee was said to have been in the habit of placing a small kid before him in the saddle, and to sacrifice it in the act of urging his steed on the enemy, never drawing bridle till the same lance was steeped in the blood of a foe. On a great occasion, when it was heard that Jimma was mustering in force, a cow or heifer was sacrificed beneath the two large *berbeesas* near our house, considered the most sacred in Goodroo, between which grew an olive-tree, and the elders under that (our symbol of peace), would hold solemn consultation over the *mora*, the map of future war and bloodshed.

CHAPTER XV.

ATTACK BY GALLAS OF JIMMA—NARROW ESCAPE—THEIR REPULSE —GRATITUDE OF GOODROO—SECOND ATTACK BY JIMMA—PERILOUS SITUATION—SECOND REPULSE—LEAVE GOODROO, AND RECROSS THE NILE—THE GALLA NATIONS—THEIR INSTITUTIONS AND CUSTOMS.

NEARLY two months in all had passed, when, one afternoon, the Gallas of Jimma made an attack upon the Goodroo village, about a quarter of a mile from our house; by the uproar, men running and galloping in hot haste, and women shrieking the alarm, we imagined them to be nearer. My Abyssinians, with their natural instinct, rushed out, armed, in the same direction as the inhabitants. Our bond of union for three years, and their fidelity to us, had been owing to, and sustained by, a principle of mutual affection and defence, for they were far from their homes and nation, as we were; I could not therefore abandon them to almost certain death, in a warfare they were unacquainted with, and on foot, amidst mounted warriors, even though my own disposition had led me to await attack instead of anticipating it.

Bell and I snatched up our guns, and in a few minutes found ourselves in the midst of a warm and confused skirmish, with about 500 of the Jimma horse. Much as I regretted the necessity that had brought us there, retreat would now have been childish; in another five minutes we were separated from each other, with a word of 'adieu.' I remained almost alone, horsemen galloping and lances showering in every direction; presently I heard, at short intervals, three shots fired in another part of the field; I

knew instantly that they were without effect. The shouts of the Jimma warriors took a taunting and derisive tone, while those of Goodroo nearly ceased, and their array fell back—the foot fairly flying, while the horse slowly retired; almost immediately I was deserted, save by one faithful servant; he covered me with his shield, the Gallas of Jimma forming a half-circle round us, and gathering for a charge, which must have been fatal to both of us. During those minutes that had thus elapsed, though the general outline of the skirmish had not altogether escaped my observation, little was I thinking of the opposing Gallas. The position in which I found myself had so completely occupied my mind, that, at this moment, my servant spoke to me as if to rouse me to a sense of our danger, for my gun was on my shoulder, and my eyes fixed on the ground. At this crisis, when I knew not if I had another minute of life, the thoughts that came with increased clearness regarding the plot, and the authors of it, interested me more deeply than the battle; and how I also reflected, in that moment, on the hopes of years, the effort in which I had wasted my youth, and abandoned my fortune, thus wrecked, thus rendered futile, *how* bitterly, I leave others to imagine!

Raising my eyes, I found myself, as I have mentioned, alone, with one exception—the circle of Jimma horsemen within lance-throw; some distance behind me, I saw, by the desponding looks of one or two chiefs of my party, who still lingered, that they thought all was lost, while the rest had left me to my fate. My companion, whom I could not then see, was, I understood afterwards, in another part of the field, in a situation similar, or worse, his gun being empty. I saw there was but one chance; I singled out the foremost horseman, just poising his second lance, and bending forward, and took aim—the cap alone went

off! Cocking the other trigger, before he had time to rush in, I fired, and he fell dead from his horse. I drew my sword, expecting the charge: but, in an instant, the Goodroo horse were galloping past me in full career, sweeping the enemy before them, who were struck with momentary fear at the fall of their most daring warrior.

I reloaded my gun, and, declining to join in the pursuit—for which purpose a horse was offered me—awaited the return of the Goodroo, some forty in number.

When we met, they told me that a renowned chief had fallen by my hand, and that I must become their friend, nay leader, as the Gallas of Jimma were of reckless courage, and would return on an early day, with many thousand horse, collected from many regions, to avenge his fall; that if we were not firm we should all be swept away by the storm, and the whole land desolated. I answered that if they came we would do our best, and that we were all brothers.

We now considered it wisest to show in every way our satisfaction and friendship, as we felt certain that, if they imagined we bore them any illwill for the past, they would, in one way or other, effectually prevent us from ever treading again on Abyssinian ground; and, indeed, it did not appear impossible that, unless we made ourselves both necessary and agreeable, they might deliver us to Jimma as the price of peace. To this end we became on the most intimate terms with the chiefs, partook of their hospitality, and adopted their customs.

With the same motives, we accepted of two horses with which they presented us, saying, that 'Jimma was too dangerous a foe to be faced on foot,' and gave them in return handsome presents of scarlet cloth, beads for their wives, &c. They brought us also sufficient provisions for our consumption, and repeatedly pressed me to become their chief, to which I returned evasive answers. They

named my horse Nephsee, or 'Life,' signifying that I was the saviour of their lives; and bestowed on me the appellation of 'Joveer,' a species of eagle.

We now passed another month quietly enough. One day, as we were strolling near the same spot, in company with about a hundred horsemen of Goodroo (who, as is customary, were leading their cattle to pasture), suddenly some three or four thousand horse came pouring over the plain at full speed (the ground is everywhere favourable to cavalry), and it was a singular and thrilling sight. These wild horsemen, apparently in utter confusion, with the bridle on their horses' necks, their long tresses and panthers' skins streaming behind them, lance-points and armlets glittering in the sun, and rending the air with wild shouts and screams, as though possessed by demons, seemed to have started from the earth, where a moment before all was still—for a slight rising ground had hidden them, till within a few hundred yards of us.

The Goodroo chiefs, though appalled by their numbers, rushed forward to the encounter, while the footmen, clashing their spears against their shields, urged the cattle at a sharp trot to the rear; reinforcements arrived, to the number of two or three hundred horse, and the combat was kept up at several points, the enemy spreading to outflank us.

My servants stole into the midst of the fight, and seeing this, we drew nearer, to act as occasion might require. The Jimma, having observed us (in accordance, as we afterwards learnt, with a previous arrangement), suddenly directed on this point the greater part of two wings that had previously been apparently engaged at some distance, waiting the signal from those immediately opposed to us. This their great numbers enabled them to do.

The consequence of this movement was soon apparent; about 100 horsemen of Goodroo, who were facing some

800 of the Jimma, to escape being surrounded, came pouring back towards the spot where we were. The Jimma cavalry whirled along in pursuit, shaking the earth with their tread, and deafening the ear with their furious war-cries in prospect of full vengeance: 'Listen, O Goodroo!' 'Lion of Jimma!' 'Hyæna of Jimma!' 'Avenger of the blood of Jimma!' 'Pursuer of the Cowards!' 'Feeder of Vultures!' 'Slayer of the Amhara!' and a thousand others, in every tone of exultation. For an instant Bell and myself rode in the rear of the Goodroo, and turning, half-checked the speed of the pursuing body. At this moment the two wings, that we had not yet seen, came pouring over a rising ground on either side, and we followed the Goodroo in flight at frantic speed, just escaping being enclosed, and then the three bodies of the Jimma united in pursuit.

The race was down a slope full of holes, and at the bottom a quagmire, formed by a brook that ran at the foot of the village, and not easy to cross, except in one spot. I took a glance behind: one of the Jimma had his spear uplifted, almost near enough to strike one of my Abyssinians, who was leading a horse belonging to his companion, who had first joined the battle; a crowd of others were within ten or fifteen yards of us, racing for the first blow; and through an opening on one side (how he had escaped till then I know not), I saw the missing Abyssinian severely wounded, one lance laying open his shoulder like a sabre-cut, just as I looked round, and others showering on all sides of him, in eagerness to finish him now that blood was drawn.

Five of the bravest of the Goodroo chiefs were with us in the rear, urging us to increase our speed. In a moment my determination was formed, not in the hope of safety, but resolved to meet the spears in my breast as best becomes a man. Inflamed also by the hot blood that at

such moments courses more impetuously through the veins, and resolved that my servants should not say I had, coward-like, abandoned them without a blow, I, with some difficulty, wheeled round my horse; Bell followed my example, and the five chiefs with him. Surprise caused the pursuers to check their speed, and in that instant I fired both barrels. Of the two nearest chiefs of Jimma, one was wounded in the wrist, and dropped his lance, another received a shot somewhere in his side; at the same moment, a warrior at my side, Kustee Dookee, hurled his spear at another advancing opponent, and pinned his shield and left arm to his side. We shouted, pushed on recklessly to the charge, and the nearest of the Jimma horsemen (astonished, I suppose, at our temerity) turned, and the rest followed their example for a hundred yards or so. We pulled up suddenly, and the wounded youth mounted his horse, which his companion still held. The body of Goodroo horse had crossed the brook in safety, owing to the breathing space thus afforded them; and we had just time to follow, when the Jimma horse returned, frantic with disappointment, clearing the brook in their stride by hundreds.

My horse being exceedingly restive and impetuous, Bell had taken my gun to load, while I held his. The foremost party of the Jimma had ridden up, thrown their lances, and wheeled off, as is their custom. The Goodroo, now at their homes, and recovered from the rush, turned upon them; the vultures were, in the midst of the confusion, attacking the yet palpitating bodies of some who had fallen, and the kites were screaming and wheeling round those horsemen whose bleeding wounds attracted them. Seeing that we were hard-pressed, I fired Bell's gun at one who was wheeling off at speed, the bullet, as it afterwards appeared, passing through his lungs. This man was the greatest chief of the Jimma, and had been sworn not to bear arms

against the district of Goodroo, but on this day had broken his pledge from his avowed desire to kill me. All this I heard afterwards; nor did I then know who he was, as they all dress alike. He subsequently died of the wound. He fell from his horse, and was carried off by his friends, as were the others who had been wounded. Many had been killed by the Goodroo cavaliers during the day, and the enemy being now somewhat disheartened, and evening approaching, after some more distant skirmishing, in which I took no part, they retired for the day.

On subsequent occasions I was present, but never being pressed, and as they would no more approach the spot where they saw us, we did not molest them. We also refused to assist the Goodroo against another neighbouring district called Horro, with whom they were about equal in point of force.

Such is the simple narrative of the cause and manner of our becoming auxiliaries in a Galla war. I have omitted to give a detailed account of skirmishes and minor adventures, in which, by our presence alone, we frequently put a stop to further hostilities, or saved some of our Goodroo friends in great straits: what I have written suffices.

I should have mentioned that, from the time of the action I have first described, constant attempts were made by emissaries from Jimma to fire our house at night; and on one or two occasions we extinguished the flames with difficulty, the hut being made of sticks and straw. I was credibly informed that they offered large rewards to Mussulman merchants to administer poison to us, and our watch-dog was certainly put an end to in that way. Six months of such a life altogether was not enviable, nor did I ever imagine I should live to record it. We arranged shields along the sides of our couches, so as to receive the thrust of a spear at night, should such an attempt be made.

We completely succeeded in persuading the chiefs of Goodroo that we had acted with them *con amore*, and thus acquired an influence over them that alone enabled us to return to Abyssinia at the end of February 1846. We had no funds to proceed with, or we might have attempted another road to the interior, this being closed to us. On our departure we were accompanied by numbers with tears of gratitude, whereas, had it appeared to them that we harboured any feelings of resentment, they would, from prudential motives, never have allowed us to return to Abyssinia, at the risk of our stirring up against them the Abyssinian chiefs in anger at our detention; whilst they were acute enough to know that to our deaths they would be able to give what colour they pleased.

By our returning on the earliest day on which the Nile could be crossed with safety, and also from a lucky accident occurring to a messenger despatched by the Galla chiefs to inform the chief of Basso of our intentions, he was not aware of our purpose till we were safe on the Abyssinian side, to the surprise of all our friends, who had long given us up for dead.

I must here mention that the Gallas of Jimma are accustomed to firearms, and only do not use them because they despise them. The Abyssinian chiefs have on many occasions attacked them with large armies, mustering sometimes hundreds of matchlocks—amongst others, one of their most famous emperors, Tasso; and have invariably been either driven back in confusion, or have suffered a heavy loss in effecting a difficult retreat, until the name of Jimma Gallas has become a terror to the Abyssinian soldiery. I mention this to show that there could be no inducement for me to act as I did, and that necessity alone compelled me to interfere. It must indeed appear obvious that, had we gone to Goodroo with the intention of joining any party in the field, we should not have left the greater

portion of our firearms behind us, and we should not have chosen, for crossing the Nile, a period of the year when the periodical rains were sure to cut off all retreat or communication with our friends. The idea kindly suggested by Mr. D'Abbadie, of our acting from mercenary motives, I leave to its own refutation; and I also ask the reader to imagine wherein consisted the enjoyment of thus risking life with the most inadequate means of defence, except that it might be, under all the circumstances, the least disagreeable manner of losing it.

I will here add to my narrative some account of Goodroo and the neighbouring Galla countries. The Galla province of Goodroo is directly to the south of the province of Basso, in Gojam. On the east and south-east it is bounded by the River Mogur, dividing it from Kootlai and Chullaha; on the west and south-west by the River Fincha, dividing it from the provinces of Horro, Gombo, and Gennateay Gombo; to the south is Noonnoo. Gombo, Gennateay Gombo, Chullaha, and Tibbie may all be included in the term Jimma, which must not be confounded with the much larger province of Jimma, situated (as nearly as I could learn) to the east and south-east of the province of Limmoo, capital Enarea. The two rivers I have mentioned each fall, after a short course, into the Blue Nile, above and below Basso. The Fincha, in the rains, has a fall that can be distinctly heard, during the night, at eight or ten miles' distance.

The province of Goodroo is the highroad between Gondar and Enarea, though there are several others, and is divided into seven districts—named Assandabo, Hammela, Loyia, Melolee, Lookkoo, Wombar, and Ararec. The inhabitants can scarcely be numbered, but, taking the area at forty by thirty miles, I should calculate them at from 100,000 to 120,000. Of these, the greater portion, being accustomed to trade with Basso, are unwarlike; but those

on the frontiers, from their numerous enemies, are brave warriors, and have no occupation but battle, and scarce a home but the saddle—almost all the Galla tribes being a nation of horsemen.

The frontier, between Goodroo and the province of Jimma, is an uncultivated battle-ground, where, driving their cows to graze, they dispute the pasturage in daily combats; and they have now accumulated a mass of blood-feuds with the surrounding tribes that renders peace almost impracticable, to say nothing of the habit that now renders the excitement of war necessary to them.

The frontier warriors of Goodroo, with none to aid them, encounter with hundreds the thousands that Jimma, united, constantly pours down upon them, besides maintaining successfully their ground against Horro, divided only by a fordable river.

Beyond Jimma is the province of Layka, on the banks of the River Givvee, a deep and narrow stream that, making a course to the west-north-west and north, by the district of the Jiddah and Amoro Gallas, finds its way also to the Blue Nile. This river abounds in hippopotami and fish, which latter are, however, held in abhorrence by the Gallas as an article of food.

Beyond Chullaha and to the south of Kootlai is Leeben, famous for its horses, which, divided by a considerable forest, touches, to the southward, on one portion of the southern Jimma, distinguished by the name of its chief, Abba Jiffar. Not having visited these districts in person, my account must be liable to much correction by future and more successful travellers.

The salubrity of the climate and fertility of the soil of Goodroo is, perhaps, scarcely equalled in the many fertile provinces that Galla prowess and Abyssinian feuds and misgovernment have thrown under the sway of pagans

or Mahomedans since the brighter days of the Ethiopian monarchy. Once in ten years or so, the smallpox is said to thin the population: with this exception, sickness is little known, and few die save in battle or of old age. It is agreeable to the eye of a traveller, and rare, to behold none of those squalid objects of disease and misery, those swarms of beggars, that infest most countries, and a land where, if luxury and magnificence do not astonish his sight, extremes of poverty are equally unfrequent. The height of the table-land may be about 8,000 feet above the sea-level, and the temperature in the shade ranges from 50° to 70° Fahr.

The productions of the soil include almost everything that Abyssinia produces on its various elevations—barley, wheat, *teph*, *doora* or millet, beans, *nook*, and the *dennich* (a species of potato, and excellent food), are found growing in neighbouring fields; their sheep and cattle are celebrated, and nature has compensated for their distance from the sea, by certain earths, strongly impregnated with salt, and of a reddish colour, to the springs of which, at intervals of a few months, all the cattle are driven to drink. Horses are bred in numbers, but are not considered equal to those of other Galla provinces. The highlands are so well cultivated, that no wild animals appear except the hyænas, that steal from the Valley of the Nile during the night.

Goodroo is, perhaps, a specimen of nearly as pure a republic as can exist, and one that would be almost impossible in a wealthy or civilised nation, where, as interests become more complicated, and consequently justice more intricate, the necessity for concentration is soon felt, to avoid confusion. Of course the influence of comparative wealth, of personal character and courage, or of inherited name, is felt here, as elsewhere; but only to the extent of persuasion, not of command—and frequently even that only

on the territory, or in the immediate neighbourhood, of the great man. Each man on his father's land is master; the public road even is thus private property, and the merchant may be stopped at the door of every hut, till he makes terms with the proprietor. The limit to this is as follows: each merchant places himself under the protection of some Galla of influence, who pleads and answers for him in every case that may arise.

The caravan, having crossed the Nile, remains at Assandabo for, perhaps, a month or two, during which period, the number of loaded mules being counted, an agreement is made with each landed proprietor, up to the frontier, either for the whole caravan, or the individuals composing it; which being paid, they proceed at once to that point, and are received on the frontiers of Jimma by neutral Gallas. This process is repeated till they arrive at the more monarchical Gallas, such as the chief of Enarea, who alone takes the whole tribute of Limmoo. They thus occupy about three months in the journey from the Nile to Enarea, a distance of, perhaps, 150 miles.

Owing to the republican system, none but the wealthy have slaves, and still fewer keep servants. A man who is well off in the world, and has a sufficiency of clothing, food, meat, and other luxuries, ploughs his own ground, reaps his own corn, guards his own cattle at pasture, and cleaves his own trees for firewood. If he possesses one servant, he brings grass for his horse, and assists as an equal at other work; he sits on the same couch with his master and mistress, eats out of the same bowl, and drinks his share of beer or mead: in fact, the only difference generally is, that he does a little more work, and has a little less fighting. Slaves are never sold, and are treated as ordinary servants, having usually a house and land of their own, which descends to their children, with the name of slave, but the reality of freedom.

Their relations with foreign tribes are settled by a meeting, in the open air, of all who choose to attend, when, standing in a circle leaning on their lances, the elders argue for peace or war—each speaking in his turn, with admirable order, and a proper deference paid to age and character. No young man, however wealthy or courageous, is ever allowed to join in the discussion. This is called the Galla *Layra*, and stands in place of King, Lords, and Commons.

The executive department is in the same hands, and their penal laws are traditionary. 'Blood for blood!' is the universal demand; and when a price is accepted, it is in proportion to the means of the slayer, and the influence and position of the defunct. The price of a wound, inflicted with the point of the lance, is forty head of cattle; that with the edge is scarcely of account, unless it produces death; and the most ghastly gashes are inflicted in this manner, in their daily quarrels in the markets.

The price of adultery can only be demanded where the parties are taken in the act by the husband, as no witnesses are admitted; it is very heavy, and if, in escaping, the adulterer wounds the husband, it extends to the whole of his possessions. If, on the other hand, the husband wounds the criminal, without killing him, he equally receives his price, unless peace is made by friendly parties. If he kills him, there is, legally, no blood on his hands, though his life would be equally endangered did an opportunity offer to the relatives of the slain party.

In all cases not provided for by law (which are not many), a *Layra* is called, when all agree as to the amount of punishment, and all combine to inflict it summarily, even to the burning of the house and despoiling the whole property of the offender.

In the possession of landed property they are fair and

just, the property purchased, even by a stranger, being seldom disturbed from its succession to his children's children; and the lawsuits on account of land are few, and generally settled amicably.

In most other matters, men act pretty much according to their fancy and means; and the only point approaching to superiority is in some small rights of duty in the different markets, which have descended in certain families from father to son, for as many generations as the Galla can count, extending perhaps to seven or eight.

There is a market, on each day of the week, in the different districts of Goodroo, and the number present at each may be, usually, from 3,000 to 5,000. The women of Jimma and Horro attend these markets unmolested, and women at all times are permitted to pass to and fro between these inimical tribes, sending notice previously to their friends to receive them. It is probable that all tribes of Gallas were originally of the form of government I have described, and many retain it to this day; the remainder have become subject to despotic chiefs.

It may not be uninteresting here to give even a meagre account of the different tribes of Gallas, who, speaking materially the same language, and emanating from the countries, as I imagine, to the west and south-west of Zanzibar, have now possessed themselves of all the finest districts of this portion of Africa.

The most distant, stretching to the north, is the country of the Azobo Gallas, to the eastward of Woggerat and Lasta, separated from the Red Sea by the Danakil country, and to the south and south-east touching on the Adaiel district. These Azobos are republicans; their province is low and hot, compared to the elevation of Teegray; and, though breeding no horses, they still retain the Galla habits, and import them in sufficient numbers from

Worroheimano, &c. to be called a nation of horsemen. They are brave and numerous, sufficiently so to have baffled Oobeay, the chief of Teegray, in several campaigns, and forced him to retire with considerable loss. In this country, cattle with immense horns are bred, some of which, hollowed and fitted at the large end, will contain as much as four or five gallons of liquid. They never make any expeditions in great numbers; but small parties, as inclination urges, make secret inroads into the neighbouring nations, to kill—the grand object in life of all Gallas. On these occasions, they mutilate the body in the part that distinguishes the sex. The food they take on these war-paths, when they are always on foot, appears judicious enough. A fat cow is killed, and the fat being separated, the lean is dried in the sun, and then carefully pounded in a large mortar, with an equal quantity of honey and of roast barley-flour, and made into a paste, a small portion of which forms a nutritious meal at any brook. The Azobo dress is similar to that of Goodroo, with the exception that the *gooddo* is worn in the manner of Teegray. There is here, I understand, a rare species of deer (or antelope), of the size of a cow, quite black, and with straight spiral horns.

To the south and south-east of Lasta are the countries of Aijjo, Worroheimano, Tehaladerree, and Ambassil. These are Gallas, but having all become acquainted with the Amharic tongue, and being subject to the sway of the Ras, they are more properly included under the head of Abyssinia. The Ras, indeed, for seventy years has been of this race, so that they may be said to have conquered Abyssinia, much as the Tartars conquered China, the Ras being obliged to adopt the Christian religion. The greater portion of these Gallas are Mahomedans. They touch, to the eastward, on the Adaiel country; and to the southward, Worroheimano, bordering on Effat, connects

the territories of the King of Shoa with those of the Ras. I have, in a previous chapter,* mentioned the nature of the tournament in which the men of Aijjo delight.

The province of Aijjo is a noble country, the most fertile and beautiful dependent on Christian Abyssinia, resembling England in many portions of its scenery, and with the tropical rains and heat less marked than in other districts. These Gallas could join the Ras with probably 25,000 horse, all mustered; but under his feeble government, private wars occupy the greatest portion of their time.

In a south-westerly direction from these is a high range of hills, ascending to an elevation of 13,000 feet or more above the sea-level, and occupied by the Wallo Gallas, whose territory touches the Blue Nile a little south of the junction of the Bachillo. These are all Mahomedans, and mostly speak the Amharic language. The greater portion of their southern frontier borders on the dominions of the King of Shoa, and the remainder on the territories of the Borona Gallas; to which I proceed, a description of my visit to the country of the Wallo Gallas being given elsewhere†—only mentioning that they are, to a certain extent, under the influence, and at the call, of Ras Ali, though they can scarcely be said to be governed by him.

The eastern boundary of Gojam, divided by the Nile, is now occupied by the Borona Gallas reaching in the opposite direction to Shoa. This is a powerful tribe, governed by one chief, who is said to be able to muster 30,000 horse. With the language and manners of all Gallas, they have themselves an idea that they were at one time Christians; and what religion or customs they have, borders on

* See pp. 55, 56.

† See Chapter IX.

that creed, though buried beneath a mass of pagan (not Mahomedan) superstitions. They preserve their independence against the King of Shoa, mostly speak Amharic, and are constantly at enmity with the Wallo Gallas.

The south-east corner of the circle of the Nile is occupied by the countries of Jarso and Toolama, inhabited by pagan Gallas, all horsemen, and of renowned courage, against whom the Abyssinians make campaigns with various success in the dry season, when the Nile is fordable at certain points. The country of Jarso is described as a completely level grass-plain of vast extent, and extremely fertile. The warriors of Toolama are said to be the most ferocious, brave, and treacherous of all the Galla tribes, these qualities having been probably more developed, from their smaller number. These are republics.

Next along the Nile, and south of Gojam, are the Gallas of Kootlai and Goodroo, the former having nothing particularly to distinguish them from their brethren of Goodroo, with whom they frequently intermarry. Both these provinces are often ravaged by the chiefs of Gojam and Damot, to avoid which they frequently pay a tribute of horses. The Valley of the Nile is here a constant scene of mutual slaughter between the Gallas and Amharas. Next, to the westward of Goodroo, and just where the Nile commences its turn to the north, is the district of Horro, already mentioned, another republic differing from Goodroo in but a few trifling customs; and to the north-west of this, following the course of the Nile, are the Amoro Gallas, a fierce and warlike race, who hold Christians in detestation. These formerly held sway over Agaumiddhur and parts of Damot, whose present chief is of their tribe, and, at the same time, a descendant from the Emperors of Gondar. These Gallas still commit

their depredations, and slaughter travellers, even as far as the neighbourhood of the town of Dembitcha, the capital of Damot.

Beyond this, to the northward, the hilly range slopes into the low and hot countries occupied by the Shankallas, a negro race already mentioned.

CHAPTER XVI.

VOYAGE FROM MASSOWAH TO SUEZ.

EMBARK FOR JEDDAH—MY FELLOW-PASSENGERS AND CREW—CROSS THE SEA—COOMFIDAH—A HOOREE—ROUGH WEATHER—SHORT OF WATER—JEDDAH—NOWABOO—ENGAGE A BOAT TO SUEZ—TURKISH PASSENGER—CORAL REEFS—ARRIVE AT YAMBO—TURKISH HOSPITALITY.

GOT BACK to Massowah in October 1846, and, after early five years' absence, I now prepared to return to England, accompanied by an envoy of Ras Ali, in charge of presents for the Queen. For this purpose, having hired a boat for fifty dollars to convey us to Jeddah, we embarked in April 1847, and, taking advantage of the land-wind, about midnight weighed anchor from the harbour of Massowah. I stretched myself on a *charpoy* on deck, and after a refreshing sleep of some hours, on awaking, found we were sailing along with a fair light breeze, and took a survey, for the first time, of my craft and its occupants. The boat was caculated to have carried about forty tons of cargo—an open boat with a lateen-sail, and a small jigger.

The cabin that I occupied was shared by the Abyssinian Envoy of Ras Ali, and was about nine feet by six, and about three-and-a-half feet in height, so that I could not well sit up in it. We had spread our hides on the boards, and arranged some of the most valuable effects at our heads. The stern-part was occupied by three small gazelles, of a curious and rare species, that were still sucking;

they were tied, and gave us no small trouble in their energetic attempts to get to their foster-mothers, some milch-goats which I had bought, and whom they heard from time to time. The forepart of the cabin, where my Abyssinian servant was preparing coffee, was open; on a *charpoy* in front of it, a Mussulman priest from Teegray had stretched himself; he had been surreptitiously introduced on board by the Governor of Massowah, and was bound on a pilgrimage to Mecca with a servant; crouching under this were three young Galla slaves, a girl and two boys, belonging to the Rais. The crew consisted of three Arabs, three slaves from Soudan, and a young Arab boy.

I alarmed the priest considerably by threatening to put him on shore at the first island we made, as having come on board without my permission; but I found him so unaffectedly simple, and withal so humble, that my anger soon subsided. We came in sight of the archipelago of Dahilac, so called from the principal island of a large group connected by shoals, on which an extensive pearl-fishery is carried on; then arose a strong north-wind, and the head-sea that ensued soon caused a commotion amongst the passengers; the poor Galla slaves and the people from Teegray, totally strange as was the sea to them, imagined they were about to die. The priest began to tell his beads, the Gallas sobbing, and chanting doleful recitatives, as they thought on their country, and, cowering down, tried to hide from their sight the vast expanse of water they now first beheld. As the wind increased, I soon found that we were scarcely sufficiently ballasted; and the Rais becoming alarmed, we ran under the lee of a small island, and came to anchor for the night. Here we saw goats, feeding untended, having been brought in boats from the main island and left there, being accustomed to a privation of water for two or three days together.

The Gallas would not lift up their heads. As for myself,

I enjoyed, as luxuries, my pipe and my coffee, and the repose to which I had been so long a stranger.

Once more on the free waves, my heart beat lightly; for it seemed as though my country were again at hand, and the four years that I had passed in toil and fatigue seemed like a dream, and the savage lands I had traversed, with slow and sometimes painful steps, as a picture that I had looked upon. Yet, for a space, I gazed on the distant mountains of Abyssinia, brought into strong relief by the setting sun, with an interest half-regretful, as I thought of the wild multitudes that peopled that isolated empire, where I had seen in action, vivid and untamed, yet mixed with a strain of feudal grandeur, the barbaric life of our rude forefathers, when Cæsar startled them in their deep forests. I could still imagine the deep tones of the warlike drums, the glittering shields, and trampling thousands, the pomp and circumstance of Abyssinian war, or hear in fancy the wild war-cry of the half-naked Galla, and the rush of their undisciplined horse, mingling with the murmur of the restless ocean, as it beat on the unyielding coral. I thought how I, a stranger, had become for a time as one of these wild people, in the banquet and the battle, the boisterous welcome, or the subtle plot; on the quick transition of varied scenes, when every passion swayed by turns—when danger, from its frequency, engendered indifference, and life, deprived of half its pleasures, was also deprived of half its wants and cares. I write as I felt, but sober reason soon dissipated the romance that, for a moment, clung to that farewell, and cast a glittering veil over the coarser and sterner fragments of that strange episode. The fair breeze of morning, as it bore me on my course, wafted all my thoughts to my own dear home; and the space between us seemed short to my ardent fancy, long restrained while return was doubtful, but now free and unchecked.

We landed in Dahilac, to fill our water-casks, and prepare for crossing the sea, about 120 miles only, yet an arduous and anxious voyage to those rude navigators, who, except in the possession of a mariner's compass, are as ignorant as their progenitors of the age of Solomon. The island is low and sandy, but producing sufficient grass for the support of innumerable herds of goats, amongst which the antelopes fearlessly browse. One of our crew, hurling the stick, with which they are very dexterous, killed one of these animals, and a native, claiming it as his private property, threatened to stop us from proceeding. The affair however was, with some difficulty,* amicably arranged, and the next morning we again sailed, passing amongst some dangerous shoals, frequently in two or three fathoms' water, over extensive beds of the pearl-oyster, and occasionally meeting the fishing-boats. Having thus reached the last point of land on the African coast, we lay there a day, under its lee, as the sea beyond appeared extremely high, and it was blowing a gale of wind.

Here we found an old turtle-fisher. These are left, in pairs, on islands where there is no water, with a jar of that necessary, and remain thus sometimes for a month, pursuing their occupation, when their comrades return and pick them up, with their prizes. They catch the turtle when they come out to feed by moonlight. With a little tobacco, I purchased some pearl-oyster meat, which we roasted and ate; it is very rich, and of a peculiarly sweet flavour. The crew also speared a small shark in shoal-water, and feasted thereon. The next day, the wind having somewhat abated, and being right aft, we launched out on the deep. The night fell calm, and numerous were the prayers offered up to the

* The language of Dahilac is peculiar to itself, and is not understood by the inhabitants of Massowah generally.

Prophet for a breeze, in dread of our water falling short—for, after the usual fashion of Mussulmans, we had only enough for five or six days. The swell was heavy, and we rolled disagreeably; in the forenoon it came on to blow strong, and we scudded away merrily; though the crew, as usual, with the exception of the 'blacks,' were greatly alarmed.

I soon found that the *Rais* (or captain) was an arrant coward, and knew little of his business, but there was now no help for it; and luckily, before evening, when we were growing somewhat anxious, we made the land, and got to anchor, before dark, near the mountain of Asseer, a part of the Arabian coast frequented by tribes of an unpleasant reputation, though more friendly to the Arabs of Yemen, of whom my crew were composed, than to those of the Hedjaz. These Arabs of Yemen are very fond of the decoction of the husk of coffee, and drink it usually, at least the poorer class. The flavour seemed to me something like weak tea with an infusion of salt. In exchanging courtesies with the Rais, he used, when at the helm, to hand to me a small earthen cup of this liquid, his arm stretching into my cabin, and I would sometimes offer him a more luxurious, though smaller, cup of my own coffee. Without books, and unable to sit up to write, my pipe was a grateful diversion from *ennui*, varied occasionally by an altercation with the Mussulman from Teegray, and in listening to the tales of the black slaves —hardy and good seamen, who had experienced many strange adventures during their life of bondage.

The Arabic of Yemen is, I think, one of the most harsh dialects of that beautiful language, and at first I was frequently at a loss to understand the crew, when speaking quickly, as they generally do. There appears to exist a greater mutual dislike than usual between the slaves and their masters of Yemen; the former despising

the latter, saying they are cowardly and harsh, and these accusing their slaves of treachery and obstinacy.

One of the slaves, on board my boat, was a man of herculean strength, and I think the best swimmer I ever saw, uniting a soft yet brave heart with a rough appearance; he pleased me much by the tenderness with which he would strive to console the poor little Galla slaves, bring them food, and cover them from the spray, which was tolerably plentiful. The boys, in the intervals of sea-sickness, displayed the pride and disdainful bearing that distinguishes them in their own country, and which, at that age, few would have maintained in the situation they were in. In their short journey from Enarea to Massowah, the merchants tutor them so well in their new creed, that all my arguments failed to induce them to eat the meat which I, a Christian, offered them, even though they saw the Mussulmans of the boat partake of it freely.

The girl would have eaten, but they attacked her violently; she argued that, if I chose to buy them the next day, I could, and they would then be forced to become of my religion. 'What does it signify to us?' she said. The youths repulsed to the last, almost fiercely, all my attempts to do them little kindnesses, and altogether verified the adage of the Abyssinian, that 'a Galla heart is untameable and unfathomable.' They certainly are a singular race. Whilst I had been amongst them, their fierce and hard nature did not so much strike me, as now, when displayed by these boys, contrasting even with the less than half-civilised mariners. They would scarcely condescend to be astonished, even by my knowledge of their language, and spoke without the least reservation, whether I heard them or not. Nothing seemed to alarm or affect them, and, even when sick, I could hear them, as they lay, giving vent to expressions of furious rage against the malady, rather than of

despondency. The girl was a gentle creature. On our arrival at Coomfidah, on the seventh day, she was adorned in a fine tawdry robe, her hair scented, and she was conveyed on shore, where in an hour or two her lot was fixed; and she took her place in the Governor's harem, the favourite of a day, to be followed, perhaps, by the drudgery of years.

Coomfidah has a tolerable harbour, but landing is exceedingly awkward, as a shoal of mud extends from the town to some distance. Having walked through this mud on my first voyage down the Red Sea, I had no wish to repeat the experiment, and sent a complimentary message to the Governor, declining, at the same time, the honour of visiting him. There is a small garrison here, generally of troublesome Arnaouts, whom the Pacha of Jeddah sends to a distance to get rid of. The trade of the place is inconsiderable, and there may be, perhaps, from 1,500 to 2,000 inhabitants.

We had a merry sail the next day, two other boats for Jeddah starting in company with us; we ran with the wind aft, and scarcely a ripple on the water, our course lying between lines of coral reefs, here and there starting into an island, sometimes within stone's throw. If a storm had come on, we should have been in a bad fix, as it now appeared that our Rais had no very distinct idea of the navigation to Jeddah; fortunately, however, we managed to keep in sight of our companions, and anchored at night in the most friendly proximity. This was the more fortunate, as they had excellent nets and hooks, and in a few minutes we were all plentifully supplied with fish.

At sunset there was an immense display of religious fervour, each striving to impress the strangers with a sense of his devotion, and the clearness of his lungs.

Our neighbours (for the crafts were lashed together),

were also possessed of the luxury of *hoorees*; these are not seraphic visitants from Paradise, but small canoes, varying in length from twenty-six to thirty feet, and hollowed from a single tree, with no keel. It is excessively difficult for an unpractised person to keep his seat in one of them, and next to impossible for him to get in without assistance; the slightest motion will capsize them, and they are adapted only for smooth water. They have a short paddle, with which they push on each side alternately, and the light craft, buoyant as a cork, skims swiftly along. The business of anchoring is rather complicated, as one of the crew generally has to carry the anchor along the bottom, and hook it in a convenient spot; in the morning, also, he has frequently another dive to detach it, but in that warm climate the water is not disagreeable at any time, nor do they ever appear to have the least dread of sharks.

The fair wind now abandoned us, and, after some baffling weather, it came on to blow hard from the northward. We were obliged to anchor for two days near the lee of an island, and attempted a sally on the third. The Rais looked anxious, as we rounded the point, and got into the seaway, and at every plunge, a loud 'Allah!' was shouted in concert by the Arabs. At last, when she fairly shipped a sea, the little craft trembled with the shock, and the skipper, turning as pale as his complexion would allow, fairly lost heart, put the helm up, and ran back—the two Jeddah boats following our example. The Rais was in a state of great excitement, and, miscalculating his distance, ran past our old anchorage, and took up a berth a mile farther in the bight, with the prospect of a dead beat out through a narrow channel. I never interfered, however, or gave way to useless anger; the man was incompetent, and a coward into the bargain, so I resigned myself in silence, and smoked my pipe

with redoubled vigour. I found that this, when I felt my anger rising to my tongue, was a great resource, as a sedative. The Rais could perceive that I saw his incapacity, and tried very hard to persuade me that he was well acquainted with the coast, and a most daring seaman. I received all his reasoning in silence—indeed, I fully expected that he would land us on a coral reef, instead of at Jeddah. But how absurd are all speculations or probabilities! Lo, with this man, as will be seen, we reached our goal in safety; and in charge of the best mariner in the Red Sea, we were afterwards wrecked! But I must not anticipate.

The Gallas were highly interested at the sight of an enormous shark, seeming to have a kindred feeling with the fish that eats people up; and they subsequently were enchanted with the spectacle of a large herd of porpoises that were rolling past in every direction, some within a few yards of us. On the sixth day our water failed us, and we were reduced to half a small cocoanut-shell daily, and I was sorely afraid that we should be obliged to return. We battled against the continued north-wind, beating up about fifteen miles a day; and our skipper asserted that, if we could reach it, he knew of a place where pilgrims to Mecca procured water along the coast; and that, if we could find any Bedouins there, they would assist us in filling our jars. We ran in through an intricate channel to this spot. The Rais was, as usual, in a state of the wildest excitement. He confessed he had never been through this channel but once before; it was a confused mass of coral reefs in every direction, and how we got through it is a mystery to me to this hour. We rubbed several times, and it was dark when we anchored, about a quarter of a mile from the shore, and the crew went off with skins for the hoped-for supply. Great was the

anxiety that prevailed; and though the moon was brilliant, we strained our eyes uselessly for an hour or two, the Rais praying fervently the whole time, as did an old rascal who aided and abetted him in his quarrels with the slaves, and for whom I had conceived a particular aversion. Presently we heard shouts, to which we responded, and at last, after much noise, the men returned with two or three skins full of water. They had found some Bedouins, whose fire they pointed out to us, and water, which they said was rather brackish, but that, if we would wait a day, we could procure some of excellent quality from the interior. I tasted it, and all the bitter waters I have ever drunk were sweet compared to this; it nearly approached an infusion of bark. However, anything rather than delay, and on we went, drinking as little as possible. The Gallas made very wry faces; even honey would not sweeten the draught, and the coffee was nauseous. After three days of this, with, as usual, a dead foul wind and heavy seas, we fell in with a boat bound from Jeddah to Coomfidah. As is the custom on these seas, the northerly monsoon being with them, they gave us a skin of water, which was a treasure indeed.

One morning a squall of tremendous violence came suddenly down, with thick rain and mist. We were nearly over, and three of the gaskets were carried away; I expected every minute to see our solitary sail blown to pieces. The Teegray priest, who had borne up pretty well against all other ills, now went clean out of his wits with terror; he shrieked to the Rais, and adjured him by his religion to lower the sail, as the vessel heeled over, and he began to pray aloud, in a mournful conviction that his last hour was come. His excessive bewilderment was comical, though there was quite enough danger, we being light, and the squall pretty stiff, with a very heavy

sea. The anguish of the Rais was little less, and, as usual, the name of Allah and the Prophet was shouted at every approaching sea. In half an hour the weather cleared, and turned to a steady breeze in our favour, so we scudded along nearly ten knots on our course: everybody instantly in the highest spirits, coffee recklessly ordered, and Jeddah confidently talked of for the morrow. The prophecy was, for once, true: on the eighteenth day from Massowah, we came in sight of the white walls of Jeddah, and I rejoiced in the unwonted spectacle, to me, of fifty tall ships riding at anchor in its calm harbour, others working in through the intricate reefs that form it, saluting the fort, and all, being idle and Mussulman, saluting each other. All these compliments being duly answered with interest, the harbour was soon filled with wreathing smoke, and the cannon kept booming over the water, till there seemed to be a general action going on. This is a kind of solemn farce, of which the Turks are particularly enamoured, and enact on every possible or impossible occasion. Such expenditure of peaceful powder must form an enormous item in the financial accounts of the Ottoman Empire.

I glided in more humbly in my little craft, and, seeing the English flag so numerous, thought I might find some of my countrymen, but the commanders were all Arabs. A custom-house boat came alongside, and I sent a note to the English consular agent, telling him I had no clothes in which I could appear in a town like Jeddah, requesting him to send me an Arab tailor, with a servant who knew the language, and could make purchases for me. He kindly sent me a suit of his own Turkish clothes, in which I speedily attired myself, my long legs protruding naked from the knee down, in a somewhat unseemly manner, for I had no stockings; and away we went to the jetty. Then arose a confusion of gazelles, goats, and innumerable shapeless packages; long bundles of lances, curious Abyssinian

garments, and a broken-down wicker-case (for I had no box or trunk); also, to complete the confusion, a small dog, which I was obliged to hold, and who entangled himself in everybody's legs, eliciting sundry curses: he drove the fowls out of my dilapidated hencoop, chased the goats into remote corners, and frightened the gazelles out of their wits, in his joy at finding himself on land. Altogether, as I stood forlorn amongst the apparent wreck of property, I looked the picture of helplessness, and felt the personification of absurdity. A few feeble attempts to enter into conversation with the Turkish soldiers whom curiosity had collected, and my efforts to appear at ease, signally failed.

At last, to my great joy, a bustling character appeared, by name Nowaboo, who invariably attaches himself to any English traveller that lands at Jeddah, and who is a singular compound of knavery, honesty, impudence, cleverness, and utility. He dragged me off in an instant to the Bey, begged that my things might be passed (as I, to shorten the business, affected not to speak Arabic), dragged me out again, cuffed small boys who stood in the way, collected an army of porters; and shields, guns, spears, antelopes, goats, and dogs began to move with magical speed towards the town. We passed the gateway, and I soon found myself domiciled in a lofty but dusty mansion. My active friend was off again in an instant, with my Abyssinian servant and a basket; in half an hour he had purchased, cooked, and dished up a decent meal, and then announced that he was about to retire to his usual *arrack* debauch for the night. One of my gazelles died of inanition, her milch-goat having become nearly dry, from want of food and adequate water.

About midnight, the English consular agent paid me an unexpected visit, to enquire if I was in want of anything, and to apologise for not having offered me a room in his

own house. The place was, luckily, tolerably free from fleas for a wonder, and we slept pretty well.

With the morning came Nowaboo, who now installed himself as my factotum, and whose strange character merits some description. He called himself a Sulemanee by origin, and prided himself mightily thereon, though he had never seen his country—the family having been settled some time in Jeddah, where they had become general agents for all Indian traders, speaking Hindostanee, Arabic, and Turkish. He was in person tall, gaunt, and powerful, though he looked emaciated from his incessant drinking. He lived upon *arrack*, and yet, though he would get through a quart or more at a sitting, he was never intoxicated, and never neglected business. He lived from hand to mouth; if he obtained for his services fifty dollars or only two, they were equally sure to disappear in twenty-four hours. He might have been rich, but would not, and he always dressed in the most ragamuffin style. There was an easy impudence in his manner that nothing could abash. He would enter the presence of the Pacha, and launch out a tirade in Turkish, bully the Cadi in Arabic, or the Arnaout in his own language—always carrying his point. Such was his assurance that he never carried arms, yet everyone feared him, and his talents were so conspicuous that no one in the town could do without him; he knew everybody's business and history much better than the parties concerned; would speak so much to the purpose, that in ten minutes he would settle an intricate affair, and send everyone away satisfied, pushing them off with all the energy and impatience of an Englishmen; and withal he never lost his temper, though often affecting to do so. He was a most practical philosopher, tolerant in religious matters, but a Mussulman because it suited him. Not a thought did tomorrow ever cost him; and he would recount all

these points in his own character with such clearness and candour, that, notwithstanding his many faults, it was impossible not to feel that he was born a superior man, who, had he been ambitious, might have made himself a name anywhere. I completed, through his assistance, all my purchases, numerous trifles, and secured a boat to convey me to Suez in ten days.

One morning my dog, running into the room suddenly, frightened one of the little gazelles that I had succeeded in weaning; she made one bound from the floor clean out of the window where I was sitting, and of course was killed. I was sorry for the little thing, that used to eat from my hand, and my Abyssinian servant fairly cried.

The great conversation of the place, at this time, turned upon the late dreadful mortality of the pilgrims to Mecca, of whom 60,000 were said to have died of a sudden and alarming cholera,—dropping down whilst in apparent health.

The boat I now hired was smaller than the other, and was said to be one of the best that sailed from Jeddah. The Rais was a freed slave, of the highest reputation as a pilot and seaman; and the crew were tolerable, consisting of three men and two boys. Our cabin was higher than in the other boat, and we had now but one antelope, for which we found a couch on the grass which I had purchased for my goats and sheep. I had consented to allow a Turk—the attendant of the French vice-consul—to accompany me to Suez; he arranged his couch on the top of the cabin. Being provided with boxes, and so forth, I was in comparative comfort; my cuisine was also better ordered, and I had procured good tobacco. Having slept on board, and taken an affectionate farewell of Nowaboo, we started at daylight; and I soon found that my Rais was equal to his reputation, being cool, certain of his ground, and anxious to push on his journey —a rare virtue in these parts. My Turkish friend soon

began to display his volubility; an easy journey was his motto, and his only joy was when we cast anchor; he bullied the boat's crew, to their great disgust, and my own amusement. I, however, took occasion to tell the Raiṣ (with whom I was speedily on most friendly terms), that he must make allowances for his verbosity, and attend to nothing that he said—a system which he thenceforth pursued with quiet temper. My Turk also, like all soldiers of his class, soon displayed a genius for cookery, that made a visible improvement in my fare, and the hooks with which I was now provided supplied us amply with fish.

The fish in the Red Sea are most delicious, and those that glide about the coral banks, like butterflies on flower-beds, brilliant in outward appearance, are some of them as delicious in flavour; they are, however, very difficult to catch, as they suck the bait with greater delicacy than even carp. Speaking of coral, I think one of the most brilliant sights I ever beheld was on diving to a coral reef, when the blaze of colours that met the eye, stretching in glowing forests far, far beneath the clear waves, was as magical as the garden of Aladdin where the boughs were laden with glittering gems. Dull as the coral appears on being brought from its rocky bed, beneath its native waters every hue and shade of rainbow tints sparkle in the most gorgeous variety. When gliding over these beds, it is never-ending amusement to gaze into the clear waves, where, at twenty fathoms, you see every fish that is playing amongst the branches, or chasing its fellows. Sometimes a shark, lazily floating midway, will arrest the eye, with its look of dull ferocity. To me there is no living thing more loathsome; though, having acquired (perhaps unconsciously) some of the indifference of Eastern phlegm, I never hesitated to bathe when I felt inclined. It is curious that, in my experience in the Red Sea, I have found these brutes every-

where in greater numbers, larger, and apparently more active, on the African than on the Arabian coast; indeed, in the Straits of Suez, from the numbers I saw whenever it fell at all calm, I confess I should not have liked to venture into the water. There are, however, enough of them everywhere.

On our first day's sail from Jeddah, we came to a curious anchorage, when we went far up a narrow arm of the sea that runs to a great distance inland, appearing like a river. As we had a *hooree* of the smallest description, the Turk was on shore in an instant, returned a fervent thanksgiving for once more touching land (this was nothing but bare sand and stones), as though we had ended a six months' voyage. He candidly confessed that he was horribly afraid the whole time we were under sail, and, twirling his moustache, hinted that under Ibrahim Pacha he was more used to fire than water. This, of course, would lead to anecdotes of his campaigns, which, allowing for a few gasconades, none can record with better grace than these said Turks. I believe the stories were in themselves true, though I have no doubt that he introduced himself *ad libitum* as the principal figure and hero of each. He was very amusing, and in the evening would smoke and tell me tales by the hour, occasionally somewhat free, but always well related, and to me novel, except some versions of our old friends the Arabian Nights. He was vain, of course, but much more talkative than most of his race—(he was a native of Crete, that is a Turkish Cretan); indeed, his tongue was seldom still, except when he was eating, sleeping, or well frightened by a stiff breeze and a heavy sea, when he would cover his head, and groan at intervals, till we anchored.

Nothing worth narrating occurred till we reached Yambo. Here my Turk brought out, with much solemnity, his holiday suit, and swaggered on shore to acquaint the Governor, Mahomed Reschid Effendi, with my arrival, and

deliver a letter I had brought him from Jeddah. The immediate consequence was a most polite invitation to dinner the next day, and orders given to the head of the police to purvey everything needful for us. I also learnt that an English collier, on her return from Suez, had been wrecked, and that the captain and three others, having made Yambo in the jollyboat, had the day before gone off to Jeddah.

In the morning I wandered over the town, where about one house in ten was inhabited, and which, with the *soi-disant* fortifications in ruins, afforded a sad picture of Turkish misrule. The devoted *Mahteseeb* dodged me everywhere in prospect of a glorious *backsheesh*, and the Turkish *cowhass*, now in his glory with a tolerably full purse, swaggered through the bazaar with the air of at least a *Bimbashee* or colonel, by drinking coffee and filling his unceasing pipe at every coffeehouse or *Ganhaw*, and twirling his sandy moustache, till it seemed a marvel that he had not worn it off. He declared that, after the awful process of beating into the harbour the day before, Yambo was an earthly paradise, and insinuated that a week's repose after our labour would be desirable.

At noon I introduced myself to the Governor, a Turk of high birth, and was received by him with that polite suavity that no nation can assume with a greater air of good-breeding. I could scarcely talk Arabic with sufficient speed to answer the numerous questions put to me, regarding all the nations of the globe, interspersed with scientific remarks—not by the Governor so much as by his attendant officers. They did not understand much Arabic, so my friend the *cowhass* acted as interpreter when requisite; and each time I gave him a sentence, he concocted therefrom a speech in Turkish of a quarter of an hour's duration, to my intense relief. I don't think anybody was much the wiser in the end for our conversation, but everyone was satisfied, which is

perhaps as good, and as rare. Pipes were, of course, incessantly smoked, and the Galla slaves, who brought them, stood in the background, with a broad grin on their countenances—having heard that I had actually seen their country, the language of which they had themselves forgotten. I learnt that, of the crew of the collier, sixteen had been drowned, and the four survivors who reached Yambo had suffered greatly from thirst. The Governor said they were much exhausted, and that he had himself superintended their recovery; indeed, I heard that he had behaved with an unusual degree of kindness to them, and he has, I trust, received at least the thanks due to him from the proper quarter.

We sat down to one of the best Turkish dinners I ever partook of, an endless variety of dishes succeeding each other every two minutes—among others, the far-famed *pillau*, which none but a Turk can properly concoct. Everybody's fingers were plunged into this; in about half an hour, though my hunger was appeased, I found myself obliged to continue, from sheer politeness; nothing to drink either, which quite militates against my ideas of comfort, as a glass of cognac would have vastly suited the *pillau*. When all were exhausted, pipes and coffee, of the best quality, in the smallest possible allowance, were served again, and more questions, with more small-talk, followed; I retired at last, very weary of the ceremony, yet much prepossessed in favour of my hosts. The truth is, that a man who, from any cause, is in a position to be questioned, if he have a retentive memory, is in danger of being forced to the extremity of despair; the same subject, with rare exceptions, leading all to the same set of questions, when he has to choose between the rack of constant variety in his answers, or the vapidness and *ennui* of repetition.

CHAPTER XVII.

VOYAGE TO SUEZ—*continued.*

LEAVE YAMBO—SHEIKH MARABUT—WIDY—MOYLA—ROUND RAS MAHOMED—TOR—FOUL WINDS AND HEAVY GALES—WRECKED—THE DESERT—TOR AGAIN—SUEZ—ALEXANDRIA—AND HOME!

WE left Yambo at night, and, slightly mistaking the channel, experienced the remarkably unpleasant sensation of grating over the coral, which elicited a most startling howl from the *cowhass.* An Arab boat is, however, accustomed to these bumps, of which we also experienced another the next day. In passing through a very intricate mass of reefs, we rubbed against the upper branches of what appeared an immense tree of coral rising suddenly to the surface. This style of sailing is trying to the nerves; and the next day being very hazy, and the landmarks invisible, we got all abroad, and at last brought up suddenly, having missed our way in a perfect labyrinth of banks and shoals. All this time my fishing was very successful, and my patience, on the whole, most exemplary.

We passed the isle of Sheik Marabut, the dwelling of a departed saint, who had subsisted for many years on the chance contribution of passing vessels to his stock of water and Indian corn, and had vegatated and died in this most desolate of solitudes. Here no charms of nature could aid the mysteries of contemplation, and the eternal moaning of the sea, for long years the only sound

he heard, might have sickened the veriest lover of its grandeur. A high and solemn festival of coffee and dry bread was proclaimed, and a due portion of each thrown to the waves, to be claimed when he pleased by the saint, who slept now in that full tranquillity which he must have almost realised in life. This ceremony having been duly performed, as a handsome bribe for a fair wind, by a necessary consequence (nature being sometimes as contradictory as her favoured children of mortality), it instantly fell foul, and we had to beat up to an anchorage through one of the heaviest seas we had fallen in with; for this is a point of the reefs, and the whole waters of the widest part of the Red Sea are here rolled down, in unbroken monotony, by the northerly monsoon.

The next day a slant of wind, in the morning, luckily enabled us to pass through a very narrow channel, of perhaps half a mile wide and some fifteen miles in length, and to reach the small harbour of Widy, the second earthly paradise pictured by the vivid imagination of the *cowhass*—the said paradise consisting of two miserable coffeehouses, and about a dozen dilapidated huts. The Turk, however, dressed in grand style, and once more revelled in the delights of land and unlimited coffee. In spite of his heartrending entreaties for delay, and a dead foul wind blowing almost a gale, away we went in the morning as usual, and a pleasant day's sail we had. The set of the sea was so violent, that, after beating about for eight hours, we found ourselves inshore again, about six miles to the north of Widy. The tremendous surf lashed its foam in one apparently unbroken line along the shore, but our daring Rais espying a small break, we ran the gauntlet, and, to my astonishment, in safety; for we passed through an opening of, perhaps, twenty yards in width, with the sea rolling heavily on either side, and breaking with a tremendous roar upon a perpendicular wall of coral, part of which it disclosed as it receded, but only

to leap forward again. The wind was now a heavy gale, and like lightning we shot through, and rode at anchor in a little bay, with just enough water for our small boat.

Here we lay wind-bound for two days. These are the trying periods of such voyages: shallow water, no fishing, sand before you, bookless, and comparatively companionless, you exhaust yourself in sleep, and keep cooking and eating, that you may not die of the vexation of inaction. On the third day I insisted on putting out, even if we were obliged to put in again; but our craft was a good one, and we made another ten miles; we then anchored on the leeside of a reef, out of sight of land. This is not pleasant, as, if you cut your cables in the night and drift—a very probable occurrence, the coral being like a knife—or if the wind chops round, you are equally likely to make a speedy end of your journey. There was nothing left but to ejaculate, with the crew, '*Fe Umr Illah !*' ('It is the will of God !') and light reiterated pipes. If Byron, with a thousand pursuits, and in his wildest wanderings, amid a thousand luxuries, could write as he did in praise of tobacco, how would he have been inspired had he sailed with me; or what feeling lines might I add, did I possess his genius!

The blue sky is lovely—so are the blue waves; and a brighter moon than that reflected from their purple depths was never sung by poet, or hailed by lover. But though their beauty be unfading, our powers of enjoying them are not; and even the poet or the impassioned youth might weary, if the one had not the world to listen to his raptures, and the other a still dearer audience. Widely different is it when your only neighbours for some weeks are a moustachiod Turk with as much sentiment as a brandy-bottle, a black Rais with grizzly beard, a slave, and a pearl-diver —companions peculiarly adapted to knock the romance out of any man.

To make amends, my soul was nightly soothed with

tales of Abba Zeyd (Saladin), without beginning, middle, or end, with some hours of which we were now regularly gratified every evening. I will not bore the reader with even an attempt at imitation, for, though they hugely delighted the rest of the audience, in my secret soul I thought that greater trash I had never heard. Though at times the language was striking, and even poetical, poetry was dead within me; and, profane that I was, 'divine philosophy,' or that other 'sweet nymph,' would have weighed as trifles before some good Scotch ale and a tender steak, or the delights of a bed, in smoky London. Not to weary the reader with what wearied me, I shall just mention that from this time the *cowhass* devoted himself, in the absence of other occupation, to cursing the north-wind by the hour, in all the terms of abuse that two copious languages could afford him, and solemnly launching the name of Allah against each separate sea as it rolled towards us—'*Allah Alayk!*'

After beating and buffeting about, we next tasted the pleasures of a two-days' baffling calm, under the shadow of a huge mountain that became a nightmare to the vision; and we drifted lazily to and fro on the water, not being able to reach an anchorage. At night rose a violent squall, luckily in our favour, when I awoke, and saw that we were flying along at ten knots an hour; the one man at the helm awake—no light, no compass, and reefs on every side; so I composed myself to sleep again, for thus one learns true philosophy. We were swept on in safety for a hundred miles, and our propitious star rose on our thanksgivings in the harbour of Moyla, bad as it is. Only two hours' rest would I give them, and the *cowhass*, I believe, thought me possessed by an evil *Jin*, begotten of the north-wind, and some steam-loving and impetuous Englishman—or, as he said, that the sea itself was my father, and a coral reef my native land. He asserted that,

in my hands, death must be his portion, thus driven unceasingly, without respite, over the ocean; that his body was entirely dislocated, and that no decent meal had passed his lips for eighteen days. He actually began to babble about his home in Crete, and his aged father, cursed the north-wind, indulged in the joys of a stroll in a palm-grove for two hours, and then resigned himself with solemn gravity to his fate. For now approached the awful moment when we were to recross the sea, the terrible sea, to Ras Mahomed, losing sight of all but the tops of the distant mountains.

We filled our casks, and started by a superb moonlight, that rose in full majesty over the bold pinnacles of Mount Shaar. Contentment for a moment filled our souls, and we, foolish mortals! deemed our voyage nearly over; the sea had gone down, and the next day a light breeze wafted us on our path.

There is a white squall that, during some months of the year, is fatal to many vessels in this same Gulf of Akaba, which we were now crossing. We had been told at Moyla that it wanted yet a week of the season for these, so we did not anchor; but as night came on, I saw, to the north, a dark spot on the horizon, with long streamers of white cloud radiating from this, and flying far over the sky. I thought it looked mischievous, and, though all on board differed from me, I interfered for once, and ordered them to put up the small sail in place of the large one. I saw this done, and was presently going off to sleep, when, as we were passing near an island rock, the moon shining brilliantly and placidly, in an instant a rush of wind struck the boat, and pressed her down for a moment. The old Rais seized the helm, which the startled seaman had quitted, and brought her close to the wind, and then the squall came on with a fury I never saw equalled. Thick mist collected over the rock, and it

seemed as if some demons settled there were pouring a thousand blasts, that came raving and shrieking down the precipices. The old man at the helm was as steady as a rock, meeting each fresh gust with the helm. The sea was cut down by the violence of the wind, and could not rise, but appeared white with foam, and the spray was blown in clouds into the boat and cabin. The *cowhass* lay groaning, after informing me, piteously, that it was all over with us, and I certainly saw reason to admire the good quality of our craft. After about four hours' running, close-hauled, we came in sight of the coast, considerably to the northward of our proper course; and by this time, the squall having a little subsided, we were able, with great caution, to put her before the wind; we flew down in a line with the land, and then all of us, except the old Rais, went to sleep as usual, though we were all wet through.

In the morning, on awaking, I found we were rounding Ras Mahomed, in a heavy sea, and the monsoon blowing strong and steady from the northward, with a clear sky. We made tack to the opposite coast above Cosseir, and then, returning to the Arabian coast, we cast anchor. A barren and desolate shore it was, white sand rising at some distance into barren scorched rocks, the ridges gradually increasing in height to the northward, where *Gibel Moussa* (Mount Sinai) towers majestically above the range. Again wind-bound, and then beating over seas that rose high above our little bark as it shot swiftly into the gulf between, the untiring monsoon ever blowing keen and strong, wearily we laboured our way towards our next blessed restingplace of Tor. In the Straits of Jubal, when nearly opposite this harbour, we were becalmed for an hour or two on the African coast, so barren and utterly desolate that you could turn to its neighbour for relief. Enormous sharks rose, and swam lazily about the boat on all sides,

following us nearly to the other side of the sea. Evening fell upon us, and in the darkness we got entangled amongst the reefs, but, for once, our good luck favoured us. After two or three awkward bumps, that quite overcame the little remaining philosophy of the *cowhass*, and elicited some tremendous groans, we somehow managed to run on a soft sandy isle abreast of the village of Tor—a boat that had, luckily, come in search of friends having put us in the right way. And lucky indeed were we in having reached any harbour! An hour later, a tremendous gale of wind arose, that, with two anchors down in smooth water, tore our sail from the lashings, and we dragged to within a few yards of the reef before it could be secured, and a third anchor brought us up. For two days it continued with unabated fury; but we fastened a cable to an old stone coffeehouse, erected for pilgrims, and lay snug.

The *cowhass* said that it was flying in the face of Heaven to contend longer with the north-wind, and, collecting his valuables, he hired a dromedary, and started for Suez, taking an affectionate and touching farewell of us, as of those whom he scarcely expected to see again. He strongly recommended me to adopt the same course; but, on the one hand, I grudged the expense, which would have amounted to twenty or twenty-five dollars; on the other, I could not leave to the charge of others the presents I was guarding for the Queen. Also I doubted the ability of my Abyssinian friend the Envoy to endure the fatigue of a journey on a camel. I had been much deceived in him, and found that he was a weak voluptuary, who thought only of sensual gratification and ease, and complained of the least physical exertion he was called on to make; yet I did not like to leave him, though I might have proceeded with my own servant, who was a noble fellow, of a very different stamp. Under all the

circumstances, I ejaculated '*Fe Umr Illah!*' ('It is the will of God!') and armed myself with patience.

At length we started, and, as usual, the wind being foul, in four days we had made some thirty-five miles of coast; on the fourth evening, finding that we could make more by keeping on the starboard tack, we lay as close as we could, and ran into a small chance nook behind a reef on the African coast. This is quite an unusual proceeding, but my Rais had more courage and more skill than any other of his race I have ever seen. It was however dangerous, as, in case of any accident, no vessels would have passed to our assistance, nor on shore could any water possibly be found. We were indeed anxious for two days, lying here in a tremendous gale: had our cables been cut or parted, nothing could have saved us, and at highwater there was rather a heavy sea even in our anchorage. We had three anchors down (or, rather, two anchors and what they call a *kolub*, or hook), and all our cable out. We saw a steamer running down from Suez, and the intense feeling that I conceived at that moment of the superior merits of European civilisation is not to be described.

Some thirty-five days of this had really nearly sickened me; and the wind abating, we agreed to start at night, there being usually then a land-wind which would favour us, and we had a fair run across the sea. The night was cloudy and dark, with the stars faintly peeping out, when we started; the land-wind had a melancholy moan, and was not strong enough to keep our sail full, while the swell was tremendous. It seemed almost like quitting a friend when the last sound of the breakers died away; for I know not why, but I was more oppressed with mournful fancies that night, than I had been since I quitted the Galla country. At the risk of being termed superstitious, I can safely say that, for the first time, I believe, in

my life, I did not close an eye that night. As I lay rolling and tossing, my favourite milch-goat, a beautiful creature, began to moan and bleat most piteously—a singular circumstance; she would leap up on the goods, refusing to lie below with her companions; nothing could quiet her, and everybody seemed uncomfortable, except my Abyssinian servant, who was sound asleep. Unable to follow his example, I got out of the cabin, and talked a little to the old Rais, who was singing doleful ditties at the helm. The clouds had dispersed, and the stars shone with the brilliancy they assume a little before the dawn. We could see the hills of the Arabian coast, apparently very distant, looming indistinctly. The Rais, who had not slept the night before during the gale, now called a seaman to the helm, and, cautioning the others to look out that we did not make the shore (which, however, no one anticipated till long after sunrise), lay down to rest.

This man at the helm had been newly married, and began to sing Arab love-songs to his absent spouse: the rest lay down, looking up from time to time. I returned to my cabin, but still could not sleep. Suddenly a wild cry from a seaman, who had risen lazily to look over the side, of '*Shap!*' ('The reef!') startled me. The old Rais put the helm hard down to tack, while the rest carried the tack aft to help her round. There was a moment's silence. I could see we were in the outer breakers, not dashing violently (for there was little wind), but rolling in strength, till, at a few yards off, they broke in foam on the reef. For the first time in our voyage she missed stays, there was no room to wear, and in five seconds, while a despairing cry arose from the crew, she struck heavily. At this moment, the moon rose calm and bright over the black rocks, lighting brilliantly the foaming breakers that now dashed over the vessel. The crew plunged into the water, and strove, in their anguish, to heave her off with their

backs. The old Rais carried an anchor astern at the risk of his life, diving through the raging sea; and my servant, with a poor Indian lad to whom I had given a passage from charity, made it fast above. I saw that all these efforts were useless; but as I could not be heard in the roar of the breakers, not to discourage them, I stripped, and, plunging over the bow, joined them; it was cold enough, and I was several times carried away in the surf, and my feet severely cut by the coral. I then got on board, and assisted in hauling-in the anchor, that was out astern. She was now fast filling, and, seeing that all was useless, I bade my servant desist from wearying himself. The crew still continued adjuring the Prophet and their patron saint, and the desperation of their '*Ya Hallowee!*'—'*Ya Nebbee!*' will long ring in my ears.

I gave my money to my servant, who tied it to his waist, put on an old pair of Turkish slippers, and then drank a copious draught of water. I filled a small *gooli*, and I had another, in which was fermented honey and water. The crew were now sitting in abject despair, their faces between their knees—sometimes groaning, sometimes staring vacantly, then tearing their hair and beating their breasts.

Day began to break, and I discovered that we were four or five miles from the shore. I expected, of course, that our vessel would shortly go to pieces; she was striking heavily every instant, and the breakers were going right over the masthead, as she lay on her beam-ends. I made an oration to the crew, showing them, in the most reasonable language, the folly of desponding; that, if the vessel broke up, we should probably lose all our means of reaching land; that the gale, as usual, was rising with the tide, and that we were on the northernmost point of a reef, exposed to its full fury. I then asked them if the reef extended to the shore, and if there was any passage. I could get no

answer, so, with my two Abyssinians (who, to their honour be it said, had their wits about them), we went to explore, carrying with us the two little bottles of liquid. I had a small piece of cloth on my head, a calico shirt and trousers, an Arab cloak wrapped round my waist, and my slippers on to protect my feet from the coral. We waded in every direction, and after about two hours found that it was an outer and isolated reef, with a broad channel and a heavy sea between it and the shore. By this time the little *hooree* or canoe I have mentioned, was brought by a boy from the vessel to us. I told the Abyssinian Envoy to get in with him, and try if they could reach the shore; but he could not sit in the frail conveyance, and it filled immediately. I then said we must get back, and see what was to be done. The tide was rising fast, and the Abyssinians would continue to explore the reef for a passage, though I begged them to return. The boy and myself pushed the *hooree* with our hands, and reached the vessel, when I saw the two Abyssinians, returning at a distance, and signalled them to hasten.

After another talk with the crew, by threats and promises I roused them a little from their stupefaction. I then told them to cut away the mast—the yard had already fallen with the sail—and to make a raft, as the boat could not hold together long. The Rais said it would not break up yet, and then a seaman offered to try and reach the shore in the *hooree*, if I could sit in it, when all could thus be conveyed in turn. I had never, even in smooth water, attempted this; but I said I would try, and that, even if I upset, they had still the raft to stand by; in case of this I did not take the water, but only the mead, as I was unwilling it should be lost if my attempt were unsuccessful, as I fully expected. When we got into the heavy sea, our little craft, which was about eighteen inches in width, and perhaps two inches out of the water, by great skill on the part of the Arab, got on pretty well; but the tops of the

waves broke into her, half-filling her each time. I was obliged, with the greatest caution, to keep incessantly baling; we passed in safety through the surf of the inner reef, and, by almost a miracle, in about an hour reached the shore. I took out my jar of mead, and telling the man that I would wait there, sent him off, satisfied of his safety, now the little canoe was lightened of its extra burden. I cheered him as well as I could, and, solemnly commending my Abyssinians to his charge, I launched him. These Abyssinians, as the reader has seen, I had left at some half a mile from the wreck, wading towards her; had I waited for them, it would have been a waste of precious time, as they had refused to attempt the perilous voyage in the *hooree* till they saw it was practicable. I had impressed upon the mind of the Rais the necessity for the raft, and, leaving them in this position, shall continue my own narrative.

I was now seized with a violent fit of shivering from my wet state, which all the heat of a tropical sun could not overcome, and, seeing that I should require all my strength, I laid down in a hollow in the sand, and was soon asleep. In about two hours I awoke, and found that it had come on to blow hard, as I expected, and there were no signs of my companions; a kind of haze that accompanied the gale was so thick that I vainly strained my eyes in the direction of the wreck. This I at first attributed to the mast having been cut away. I next began to picture to myself the possibility of the craft having broken up, in which case the chances were that all on board would be lost. The thought of the untimely death of my Abyssinian lad, who had served me faithfully through so many dangers, excited me even to tears; and in the solitude of the desert, where no sound even of insect life disturbed the stillness, I wept aloud at the painful idea. I gazed around, and saw that a plain extended for miles to the foot of the hills, that then seemed to exclude further

progress. I saw, in the intense heat that the sun in its passage to the meridian was already throwing, the prospect of a painful death by thirst for myself, and I now began to think of the course I had better decide on. The gale precluded all hopes of any of my companions landing for hours, and every moment was precious, as the village of Tor, my only hope, must be, by the nearest road, nearly forty miles off. I calculated my strength, and determined upon attempting to reach it alone, and to send succour to the others, who, even if they were with me, could not have endured the fatigue of such a journey. I acted instantly upon this idea, and taking up a lance that had been in the *hooree*, and my little jar of mead, I quitted the shore, and bent my steps towards the mountains. It took me two or three hours to reach them, and, seeing no road, I began to climb them, in order to reconnoitre the country before nightfall. I was fearful to take the coast, lest some cliff might bar my passage, when return would have been fatiguing and impossible. The exertion of mounting this loose sand, in which my feet slipped back, was so great as to render my thirst intense (it will be remembered it was the end of May); and on tasting my mead, I found that the sun and the motion had already so strongly fermented it, that it scorched my palate like ardent spirit. Yet I would not despair, and it was already three o'clock in the afternoon (as near as I could judge), when I had surmounted what appeared the highest point—perhaps 1,500 feet above the sea. Here I saw myself at once barred by huge precipices with ranges of hills beyond. Looking back on the sea, however, to my joy, I found that the wreck was still on the reef,—a small black speck amongst the white foam, and I then calculated that in the evening they would be able to land.

I then descended to the plain, and began to skirt the

hills to the northward, where there appeared to be a break in the range, though Tor lay southerly. I walked rapidly till near sunset, when, to my delight, I found myself in a valley passing through the mountains, though whither it might lead I could not tell. Some camel-tracks, however, somewhat reassured me; my thirst was already intense, and a sip of mead rather made it worse than otherwise, being hot and fiery. As night began to close, I found that I had rounded the hills, and had got into a vast plain that permitted me to alter my course, which I accordingly shaped, as near as I could guess by the sunset, south-westerly—the hills now lying on my right hand, between me and the sea. The freshness of the night revived my strength, and I pressed on, though there was no moon, till midnight, guided by the stars. I then laid down, and had a deep and refreshing sleep for about an hour. Starting up, I continued my arduous walk; my feet were now beginning to get sore from the slippers, which, having been saturated with wet, were now as hard as rock, and pieces of coral that had broken in became painful. I could not see the ground well, and stepping into holes and uneven ground, that jarred me painfully, added to my fatigue; my drop of mead was expended, and I had no hope but in pushing on. The deep and unbroken silence would have been relieved by even the cry of a jackal or hyæna; and as great peril brings with it a sense of indescribable calm, I believe that I should not have turned aside had I seen a lion in my path. All night I walked, and, though wearied, the thought that other lives depended on my exertions assisted to strengthen me.

At dawn Mount Sinai was before me, and I found that the darkness had betrayed me too far to my left, and that I must have traversed much needless distance; turning more to the westward, I trod the endless plain of barren sand, till once more the sun began to beat fiercely

on my head, and my weakened limbs faltered under me, as thirst again raged in my breast. At last I saw camels, and hope revived within me, but, having reached them, I found they had no owner or guardian; almost desponding I dragged on, not daring to stop, lest my stiffened muscles should refuse afterwards to bear me. About noon the mirage blazed over the desert like a lake of molten metal, and my head was throbbing as though on fire. Passing near a male camel, he rushed upon me fiercely; wearied as I was, I with difficulty kept him at bay with stones, and for an hour he thus pursued, forcing me to stop and face him frequently—when he left me.

I saw at last, with a pleasure I cannot express, a human form; I almost ran till I reached this, and found an Arab woman tending camels. I stopped her, told her my story, and begged for water. She swore she had none, but that the village was close by; I said it was close for her, but that I should drop before I reached it. She renewed her denial. I believe, had it been a man, I should have forced him to relieve me; but I reflected that I could not tell where her store of water was, that much precious time might be wasted in the effort, and, finally, that if my time was come, no water could save me; so, mustering once more my philosophy, I left her,—not, I am afraid, with a blessing.

For two hours more I journeyed. The heat was too intense to be described, and not a breath of air fanned my parched cheek. Despair for a moment seized me. I thrust my head into a tuft of dry grass, and lay panting on the ground that scorched my limbs. For an instant I became wild, and thought if it were not better to die at once on my lance, than perish thus miserably; but I instantly overcame the unworthy suggestion, and roused myself to one more effort. I threw aside the weapon and my cloth, which was now heavy for me, and again started, but slowly.

I could have borne little more, when I suddenly came upon a flock of sheep. Looking round, I saw a small blue cloth on what appeared to be a bush; I ran to this, and found it was a shed, lightly constructed of grass, within which two little Arab girls were sleeping. I touched them, and, awaking, they sprang out with a shriek. I certainly looked anything but respectable or inviting. I spoke to them, begging for water. After some hesitation, they came and gave me a bag of some goat's milk, which I drank with an eagerness that may be imagined, though swallowing was painful to me. One of them led me to some distance, and pointed out a tent of skins, to which I made my way, and threw myself down on a hide quite exhausted. There were three or four Arab women, to whom I could not say a word but 'Water!' and, in spite of their kind endeavours to prevent me—for they at once saw my situation—I swallowed copious draughts. After asking me some questions, and almost weeping over my disjointed story, they brought me food. I could scarcely get it down, but just managed a mouthful at intervals softened in milk, and kept drinking it every few minutes. I felt as though a river would not satisfy me. They wished me to remain there, but I thought of my comrades, and said I must get on.

Some men now came from Tor. I told them my tale, and offered them large rewards if they would go, with camels and water, in search of the others. I had nothing, however, to show, and their camels were feeding at large in the desert. One at length brought a camel, and took me up behind him, to assist me to the village. I could hardly rise, and was almost too weak to keep my seat. Fatigued as I was, I preferred to limp on foot the last half-mile, as I could no longer sit on the camel's bare back.

It was just dark as we got to Tor. Here I calcu-

lated on finding some officer of the Pacha of Egypt, who would send succour to the wreck by land or sea. An old Greek came out, and kindly received me into his house. I laid down on a divan, and begged for some one to bleed me; no one could be found, nor could I procure an instrument wherewith to open a vein; and I doubt not fever would have been the consequence, when suddenly my nose began to bleed profusely. This was repeated in the morning, after which my head was clear, though my limbs ached for a day or two, and the nails fell from my toes. The only other ill effect was the extreme soreness of my palate and throat, which lasted a week. I had no dress but my shirt and trousers, and an old jacket with which my host had supplied me. He was poor, and my food was but scanty, but anxiety regarding my companions prevented me from feeling these deprivations.

As I had promised rewards to those who should bring in even one of them alive, and mentioned also that they had money with them, several Arabs had started immediately, and, on the second day after my arrival, brought me news. They said that, just as they found them on the coast, the third day after the wreck, several boats, beating up, had seen them, and come to their assistance, and that one boat had taken them all on to Suez—they having previously given me up for dead. I waited for the confirmation of this news, and, in effect, on the next day, one of these boats returned, being short of water. In this boat was the Governor of Tor, a Christian, who brought me my dog, picked up alive on the wreck, where he had existed (I know not how) for four days, standing on a small plank, and also a goat that had survived in like manner. The Governor supplied me with four or five dollars—with which I paid the Arabs for their news—and for five more arranged for a dromedary to carry me to Suez.

Tor is, I think, the poorest village I ever saw; it is

the embouchure of the Valley of Moses, fertilised by a stream from Mount Sinai; the water is delicious, and the dates abundant. But none can know the beauty of the palm-tree, can appreciate the crystal fount beneath its shade, can feel why the Arab poet should sing its charms with those of the mistress of his soul, who has not first been wearied and parched in the wilderness of sand, white and glowing, that Dante omitted in his Inferno because he had never seen it! Amidst this, the clear fount that greets the wayworn traveller may indeed claim its title of Diamond of the Desert; and well might the Wizard of the North make pagan warrior and Christian knight forget their wrath, and pledge each other in a sweeter cup than 'Burgundy in sunset glow!'

The woman who had refused me water was upbraided by the whole tribe, who hastened to excuse themselves from the stigma, by saying that she was an old maid whom no one would marry (a bitter reproach), and that she was sour against all mankind. It was fortunate that I had been well used to the sun, so that my shoulders and neck were not blistered by their exposure.

I started on the sixth evening after my wreck, with the owner of my dromedary. We took with us one goat-skin of water, dates, biscuits, and flour, a little paper of ground coffee, and tobacco. The moon lighted us on our way till midnight, when we slept for an hour or two. Before dawn we recommenced our journey; and, resting for an hour in the middle of the day, after sunset found ourselves in the gorge through the mountains where I had passed. We had been actively journeying—marching some fourteen or fifteen hours—and were still about eight or ten miles from the shore where I landed; so that, considering my first useless journey up the rocks, and the wide circle I had taken during the night, some idea may be formed of the distance I had travelled.

How delicious is the hour of sunset in those climates, the fragrant cup of coffee, the handful of dates, the ever-soothing pipe, the evening air that cools the throbbing temples, and the mellowed light, when the contracted and aching eyeballs can again expand! The silence, and the relief from heat, induce a pleasing languor, as you stretch yourself on the sand, and you gaze with a feeling of gratitude and affection on the camel—the faithful companion, docile and true—who is browsing at hand, and whose unsightly form and inodorous breath soon appear to you graceful as the palm-tree of the desert, and sweet as the roses of Cashmere!

But the moon rose and lit the breakers, that moaned unceasingly as ever, and again the untiring limbs of the camel bore me on my path by the wild sea-waves. Now I trod on the firm land; but when last I beheld that scene, the restless sea had sought me for its prey—that sea where hundreds had met their fate, the same moon shining on them, and making beautiful the devouring ocean—their grave! The scream, the

Wild cry that rose from earth to heaven,

seemed again to break on my musings; it was my Arab companion, singing his monotonous songs, to ward off sleep. Finding myself drowsy, I struck up some popular English melodies. My companion, not in the least disturbed, continued his own strain with the utmost gravity. He had mounted the camel behind me, and every now and then his song would die off, and his head fall heavily against my back, when, waking up, he would give out an unearthly howl, as the commencement of a new stanza.

When the moon set, we lay down, and slept till daylight. I suffered severely from the cold at night, having no adequate covering, and was obliged to walk rapidly for some hours each morning to restore the circulation.

The second night we reached a stream—the only one between Tor and Suez—the water of which is very brackish, and indeed somewhat bitter. A copious draught of any quality, however, is not to be despised; and when you quit the bushes that relieve this valley, the unbroken waste that prevails until you reach the Nile makes you look back on it with some feeling of respect. The northerly monsoon, that had so persecuted me at sea, was not idle on land; and I was tormented by the fine sand driven in my face the whole day, which, with the strong glare, is likely to produce inflammation of the eyes.

I reached Suez, however, on the fourth evening, had some supper—a meal which I ate with the voracity of a starved Indian—and then, for the first time for more than four years, enjoyed the luxury of a bed, my faithful cow-hide having, till now, served me in that capacity by land and sea.

I had an affecting meeting with my Abyssinians; and in the morning, when settled in comfort—which to me was luxury—heard the recital of their adventures since I left them on the reef, making for the wreck.

In their hope of still finding a passage along the reef to the shore, they had delayed their return so long, that the tide had risen, the wind also bringing the sea over, and they had been obliged to cling for some time to a coral rock rising above the rest; from this the breakers dashed them several times, to their imminent peril, and at last, making a great effort, with their feet cut to pieces, half swimming, half wading, they had reached the wreck. Shortly afterwards, a couple of them attempted the *hooree*, but were upset, and they relinquished the idea. They then cut away the mast, and, with the planks and the yard, constructed a raft. On this they succeeded in landing in the evening, when the wind fell. The next morning, finding that my footsteps led into

the interior, they concluded that I must either be devoured by wild beasts, or have perished of thirst. They wandered despondingly along the coast, without the energy necessary to sustain them. Nothing could have saved them from death, nor would they ever have reached Tor, when the Arabs, whom I had sent on the night of my arrival, found them on the afternoon of the next day, not having gone more than ten or twelve miles from the place where they landed.

At the same moment, a vessel beating up had seen their signal, and anchored near them. Previous to this, some who had lost heart had drank the sea-water, though the cooling wind, and the power to bathe frequently, should have much alleviated their thirst. They did not believe the Arabs, who told them I was alive, and that I had sent them; and having money, bargained with another small craft, that came from Tor, to take them on to Suez. They first visited the wreck, but another boat had been beforehand, and stripped it. In this voyage to Suez, they were again nearly swamped, and were obliged to scud before a squall; they afterwards struck near the harbour, but on soft sand; and finally, much exhausted, reached their journey's end.

After a few days' repose I started for Alexandria; but the Abyssinian Envoy was so frightened by this his first voyage, that he refused to attempt a second, and I parted with him at Cairo. The presents were nearly all lost, and the small portion recovered was too much damaged to be fit for presentation to Her Majesty. Early in the month of August, 1847, I arrived in England.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MISSION TO RAS ALI.

ARRIVAL AT MASSOWAH—TURKISH GOVERNOR—ROUTES TO ADOWAH —SHIHO TRIBES OF TORA AND ASOWARTA—MONKOOLOO—CROSSING THE MOUNTAINS—AIDURUSSO—KIOKHOR—KHODA FELASSEE—GOONDET—THE MARUBB—A FREEBOOTER—ARRIVAL AT ADOWAH, AND RECEPTION THERE.

In the beginning of 1848, I returned to Abyssinia as Consul, and specially charged with a mission and presents to Ras Ali, the chief of Northern Christian Abyssinia—now quite distinct from Shoa, since the fall of the Gondar Emperors. I commence the narrative with my arrival at Massowah, the only seaport that affords the Abyssinians the means of exporting the rich produce of their own country, or of the Galla provinces of the interior, and of importing the few articles of civilised luxury of which they are at present cognisant or desirous.

Massowah is an island situated at the entrance of a large bay, which forms, between it and the mainland, a small but secure harbour; and there is another and better harbour, unfrequented, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the northward, formed by the continent. There are two other small neighbouring islands, one used as a burial-ground for Christians, and the other as a quarantine station for smallpox. At the bottom of the bay is the town of Dohona. The rest of the mainland in the neighbourhood is only occupied by some collections of huts belonging to the nomadic tribe of Bedouins.

The Turks at present occupy Massowah. The establishment consists of a Pacha, a Custom-house officer, about 250 Nizam, and 200 Arnaouts, or irregulars, with their respective officers.

Massowah and the adjacent territory were first seized in the time of the Sultan Selim, when a fort was built at Dohona, whose ruins are still visible. Subsequently, when the Turkish power was still vigorous, a Naib was appointed for the government of the mainland, and more lately of Massowah also, on a salary of 1,000 dollars per month. This family of the Naib is Teegray in origin, but having become Mahomedan, gradually separated this country and authority from Abyssinia, on the break-up of the empire, probably about the time of Mahomed Gryne's invasion. They were the acknowledged chiefs of the country when appointed Naibs by the Turkish Pacha of the Hedjaz. Subsequently, the Turks almost entirely abandoned the colony, and indeed left only some 30 irregular soldiers as a guard of honour to the Naib, who became almost independent, and resided alternately, as the lieutenant of the Sultan, at Arkeeko and Massowah.

The Naibs were always fanatical, cruel, and rapacious, until the extinction of their power, which thus happened. First, two members of the family quarrelled, and each applied to Jeddah to be named Naib. Being nearly equal in force, a few Turkish troops, with the firman of the Sultan, sufficed to give one the preponderance, who was accordingly proclaimed with firing of cannon, and invested with the glittering cloak sent by the politic Pacha of Jeddah. The Naib became thenceforth the acknowledged vassal of the Pacha, and resided at Dohona, having power only on the mainland, under a certain surveillance, cautiously exercised by the Kaimakan or Governor of Massowah. The country, however, shortly after this (in 1846), reverted for a short time to the Pachalic of Egypt, and,

under the vigorous administration of Mehemet Ali, soon made more effectual progress. The great desire of this energetic and wise prince was to conquer Abyssinia and the provinces situated between Ghizeh and the Red Sea to Massowah, and thus to form, with Sennaar, Dongola, Nubia, and the Arab tribes, one complete and compact empire from the source of the Blue Nile to Alexandria. Nor would the undertaking have exceeded the powers of Egypt's ruler, had he not directed his cares and his armies to the futile conquests of Syria and the Morea.

The Governor of Massowah, now deputed with ample powers, was a vigorous, able, and unscrupulous man, full of courage and resource, and who already, by anticipation, grasped the fertile province of Hamazain, enclosed on three sides by the armies of Egypt. He sought immediately a quarrel with the Naib, rescinded his pay entirely, and attacked Dohona, burnt it, and built a strong and capacious fortress, which he filled with 400 Egyptian troops, having now some 600 men at his disposal.

This had occurred during my absence of a year in England, and a new governor had been sent to displace him, who arrived at Massowah a few days before me. One principal reason of his removal was the complaint of the French consular agent here, and some other serious charges by the people of Massowah, which the new governor was authorised to investigate. I thus found, on my return, that the power of the Naibs was completely crushed—one being in chains at Jeddah, his successor poor and submissive—and that the government of Massowah, with the country for twenty miles or so on the mainland, was in the hands of the Pacha of Egypt. Here my narrative commences.

I arrived in the brig 'Tigris,' of the Hon. East India

Company's Navy, and received every facility for landing, unexamined, the numerous packages containing my effects, and some presents for H. H. Ras Ali, on the strength of letters to that effect from the Pacha of Egypt, who had been officially informed of my journey. I may mention, as a strong illustration of the Turkish style of diplomacy, that the Governor of Massowah, on his own confession and avowal, made to my secretary, had received a letter, privately instructing him to throw every obstacle in the way of my intended journey. He declared, at the same time, his intention of disobeying this private order, inasmuch as, he said, in case of a quarrel with the British Government, he would be immediately sacrificed as the peace-offering.

It is clear, that any expedition for the purpose of throwing open to the prying Frank their stronghold of agreeable domestic slavery (the Gallas), or the country of cold breezes and clustering vines, which their mouths water to possess (Abyssinia), could not be agreeable to the Turks.

The reader must now be informed, to prevent error, that, with the exception of the Governor's miserable residence, and some ovens belonging to the Banyan merchants, every house, as it is called, in the island is built of sticks, and covered, walls and roof, with grass; the usual size of the best residences being 20 feet long, 10 feet wide, and 10 feet high. These materials, it is hardly necessary to state, exposed to an atmosphere of 110°, and a sun of unmentionable ardour, are some degrees more inflammable than the best tinder of our damp climate; and I was in no degree surprised to find that half the town had been burnt down, only a few days previously, and the process of rebuilding edifices on the same wise idea was progressing rapidly. In one of these I resided, but fortunately there are stone magazines, which, in some degree, insures the safety

of the property in them, though to reside in them is impossible, from the heat.

We arrived at the hottest season, and my kind friend Adams—lieutenant of that ilk—and his men, seemed to think that Aden was preferable. He afforded me every assistance to render my wretched hut habitable, and by showing me every consideration, strove to establish my position in this town, little habituated to respect Europeans.

Northern Abyssinia, by which I mean all the territory inhabited or governed by professing Christians, is now more or less subject to Ras Ali, the Ras of Begemder, the title formerly signifying the prime minister of the *Hatse*, or Emperor of Gondar—that monarch, since the time of Ras Michael, having been a mere shadow, and of no account in the government of the country. The Ras is feudal chief of all the territory, from Efat to the borders of Sennaar, and from Basso to the highlands of Hamazain, hanging over Massowah. But in this unruly realm, to be nominally chief is one thing, and actually to govern is another; and as there is no parallel to it now to be found in this steaming and telegraphing world, I must point to those periods of the Middle Ages when the king, or lord paramount, was yet struggling against the force of proud barons and lawless soldiery, and when each man might reasonably hope to raise himself to the height of power, by force of his good lance and shield. Such is the nearest picture I can give of the general state of the kingdom of Ras Ali, allowing for the vast difference in splendour and chivalry, arising from the greater wealth, the stronger passions, the prouder nature of Europe, and, above all, for the tender and ennobling respect for woman that almost redeems that savage period.

The Ras Ali, at the time of my arrival, completely governed the provinces from Efat to Sennaar, comprising

the Gallas of Aijjo and Worroheimano and the Agows of Lasta, Begemder, Dembea, Gondar, Kwora, &c. His greatest feudal dependent was the Dejajmatch Oobeay (called in Harris's work the Nero of the North), whose subjection had just been accomplished, after a six months' rebellion and campaign; the Ras had concluded a peace with him, on the conditions of abandoning a certain province, the payment of an annual sum of money, and of sending part of his troops to the Ras's assistance whenever the latter should demand them. With the exception of these submissions, Dejajmatch Oobeay was absolute lord and master of Teegray, Semen, Waggera, Walkait, and all the provinces from Gondar to the Red Sea—a territory not inferior, in reality, to that actually possessed by the Ras, but which the pride of Oobeay regarded as little better than a field, while saddled with conditions of vassalage, however slight, and unaccompanied with the coveted title of Ras. He had now, however, twice measured his strength against his feudal superior, and was likely to be cautious how he ventured to do so a third time; nevertheless, it is evident that he would be much excited by the report of the vast treasures I was conveying to the Ras—that he might try to possess himself of them at all risks, openly or secretly, and with ease thwart my journey in many ways; and, furthermore, it had so happened, that I had seriously quarrelled with him on my former journey in the country.

These were grave considerations, and, knowing the character of the man I had to deal with, and also as a course consistent with the dignity of my mission, I wrote, informing him of my arrival, my intentions, and my expectations of a hospitable reception and convoy from himself. Though inwardly deeply chagrined to think that another should be acknowledged, even in Europe, as his superior, the rather as most Europeans

had represented him as the king and greatest power in these parts, yet his pride and dignity caused him to return a gracious answer. As I had sent him a carpet, after the manner of the country, he sent me a mule, which, not being a particularly good one, I converted into a baggage-animal for part of the Government effects.

I now turned my attention to the transport of myself and effects to Adowah, the capital town of Central Teegray, and a restingplace for further operations. I say resting-place, inasmuch as the convoy of the amount of property I had (for Abyssinia immense in value and larger by fame), was not a trifling matter, nor one to be performed too rapidly in a country generally so disturbed, though it is true that in Oobeay's territory my only apprehensions were on account of Oobeay himself. I had, however, to pass a tract of country, occupying four or five days, through the tribes of Shihos, to arrive in Oobeay's dominions; and as these are independent, some difficulty might be apprehended here. To render affairs still more complicated, the prime minister of Oobeay, with his army, was moving like a dark cloud on the mountains of Kalagooza and Hamazain, whose troops might at any moment be let loose, without warning, like a torrent in the direction of Massowah, sweeping away in their course friend and foe, and, should I be unlucky enough to encounter them, probably ending my expedition most effectually.

There are two roads, through the countries of two tribes of Shihos, leading to Adowah, the one through the tribe called Asowarta, the other, Tora—the one passing by Dixa and the province of Kalagooza, and the other by Kiokhor and Serawee. These two tribes form the Shiho nation, and occupy the mountainous tracts between Massowah and Christian Abyssinia, extending perhaps in length, to the south, 60 miles, and in breadth, easterly and westerly, from 80 to 100 miles. The Bedouins, living on

the plains immediately bordering the sea, are an inoffensive powerless race, and are chiefly camel-drivers; whereas the Shihos use oxen for all purposes of burden, and are quite distinct in language and manners. Both have been described in the first chapter.

The only practicable road through the tribe of the Asowarta to Dixa is along the bed of a torrent (two days' journey), lined on each side by mountains rising over mountains, some thousand feet in height, and nearly perpendicular, so that the sun is visible only a few hours each day. For safe conduct along this road, the Asowarta Shihos—who are republicans, and governed only by a conclave of elders, owing tribute and obedience to no one—demand money, and furnish a guide to all travellers, of whatever description. The proper charge is half a dollar for each guide, and ten or twelve persons being of one party may pass for this small sum, feeding the guide also on the road. With an European the case is different, particularly if he have much property. Meetings and councils are held as to the charge that should be made; and the Asowarta having nothing to do, and everyone having a right to talk as much as he pleases, these councils may last hours and days, without the slightest reference to the traveller's impatience. A bargain is at last struck, from five to twenty dollars, according to circumstances, and you start, thinking you are at last fairly off, and forgetting your wrath, which had previously nearly choked you. At every stage of the journey, however, they contrive new delays; tribes of beggars torment you, you must feed your guides and all your guides' friends and relations (who come in troops), and fresh meetings deafen you at each mile. Begging, they tell you, was the custom of their fathers, and has no reference to the wealth or poverty of the individual. Eating likewise I presume to be an heirloom; and they certainly have preserved it well, inasmuch as they will be

happy to eat and drink coffee as long as you will continue to supply them, and they will then beg a little of the raw material to take home.

Again, in a short time, the traveller may be distracted by a war-dance, accompanied with a dismal howl intended for a song and chorus, on the principle of Ossian—a recitative, referring to screaming vultures feeding on the carcases, and scenting the blood from afar, &c. Your servant then informs you, that this being a great compliment, paid only to great men like the son of your father, you are in duty bound to disguise your anguish, and hand over another dollar or two to the Asowarta; and you will thus, on arriving at Dixa, have gone through your first lesson in patience in Abyssinia—a country which I fearlessly assert to be the very best of schools for that benign virtue, and, of all Abyssinians, the Shihos to be the best teachers, as well as the most expert of fleecers. It must be added, however, that they keep faith rigidly, and are responsible for any loss of property you may sustain, by theft or otherwise; nor do I know of any instance of their having acted dishonestly to anyone, native or stranger, in this respect. They merely *extract* from your free and generous disposition; and as it is useless to get into a passion, the only thing is to compound with them as cheaply as possible, and to part friends.

The best advice I could give to a traveller amongst these, and all the nations of Africa with which I am acquainted, is to preserve, intact, gravity and composure of manner. The gestures and impatience of many Europeans, arising from their superior regard for the value of time, and their more impetuous energies, are looked upon as frivolities by these tribes, who cannot understand their springs of action and emotion; consequently, they lose more time than they gain, and may, by a rash word or movement, even imperil the whole fruit of their labours in some useless quarrel,

especially amongst the natives I describe, who regard man as man, and for his peculiar and personal qualities, and are far too ignorant, for the most part, to think of or care for his nationality. I think that, considering their ignorance, they are not unjust—considering their poverty, they are not rapacious; and if little is to be found amongst them that is alluring, little also exists of positive and active vice; and the experienced traveller will generally agree with me, that the greatest bore is their eternal talking, and the gravity with which he is expected to attend to endless discussions on the reasons for disbursing a dollar; but I caution him still to have patience, and not to part with his cash too easily, as the precedent might be dangerous to his purse.

During the rains of Abyssinia proper, from June to October, some precautions are required, as torrents of fearful rapidity and force frequently pour down without warning from the mountains, and sweep away the camp of anyone who has not been prudent enough to select the slightly raised ground, that may be found here and there on the borders of the watercourse. So unforeseen are these, that even the Shihos are sometimes surprised, and Abyssinian caravans not unfrequently suffer large loss of life and merchandise. The sun may shine merrily above you, when the warning roar, like distant thunder, announces the resistless advance of the waters of a thousand hills; and in a few seconds the turbid flood is dashing along, rolling rocks and vast trees in its impetuous course, and leaping high in foam at each turn of the current.

The road through the country of the Tora Shihos is through circular defiles, and along the bed of another of those foaming torrents that pour resistlessly down to the sea in the months I have mentioned; but the Shihos have not the power to demand anything, the right of guidance being vested in the hands of the villagers of

Kiokhor, the first Christian village you encounter, some 90 or 100 miles from the coast.

Here there is no trouble with beggars or tormentors, comparatively speaking, but you are not guaranteed the same safety of life and property; and, moreover, the Shihos of Asowarta, who claim it as a right that all caravans shall pass through their territory, may take it into their heads to attack travellers who go in the other direction, though they fear and respect Europeans. The Mahomedan slave-caravans, however, invariably choose this road, having sometimes a force of 600 shields, and, being accustomed to perilous encounters during their slow progress from Enarea to Massowah, none dare to molest them.

Fearing the delay, and the long tongues of my friends the Shihos of Asowarta, and confident in my reputation with these wild races, I chose this route, and started in December, 1848, from Massowah, with an old and trusty friend of Kiokhor, and a Shiho—the best, I believe, of his race. I had suffered severely from an attack of dysentery, but believed myself nearly cured, and had received an accession of my old servants, who poured down from Abyssinia as soon as they heard of my arrival. We were in arms, a party of some ten shields, and six or eight fowling-pieces, necessary here for wild beasts, and I had of goods, twelve mules laden, and twenty-four porters. The mules were purchased, inasmuch as they cannot be hired, at ten to fourteen dollars each, and the porters hired as far as Adowah at one dollar a head, the load of the latter being from 50 to 60 lbs. weight. The first part of the journey (two days) is performed with camels, at a charge of $1\frac{1}{2}$ dollar each, the road being pretty level, after which their loads are transferred to the mules and porters, and the Bedouin camel-drivers return.

Monkooloo is, or was, a small village on the mainland, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Massowah, where I had purchased a small

straw hut and plot of ground, as a rendezvous or starting-place for my suite and baggage. It is obvious that this could not be done in an island. From there I started, and made only a small journey of six miles as a shake-down. By some peculiar good fortune, my tent was to follow next morning, and of course rain fell in torrents, and 13 inches of water was the pleasant hydraulic bed I slept on. The darkness was thick, and the night was spent in chasing hyænas from the mules' heels, and saving as much as possible the property of his Highness, to which end our persons suffered considerably.

Proceeding the next day, drying ourselves in the sun at intervals, we slept at a place notorious for fevers, and I may state, as the consequence of our two days' journey, that sixteen or twenty of us were seized at Adowah with fever, of which several died; and I was spared, I suppose, in consideration of my having already a fever that had visited me, more or less, for ten years. The road is wild, with sameness throughout, the rocks rising high on each side, and at last an abrupt ascent places you 2,000 feet above the sea-level, in a cool and agreeable climate: fresh verdure and some small cultivation of grain here first meet the eye.

Occasional families of Shihos, more dirty than picturesque—the females being clothed in coarse woollen cloths, carefully smoked and greased, and for the most part considerably ugly; the men light and sinewy, with each a lance, a small shield of elephant's hide, and a curved double-edged sabre some 20 inches or 2 feet in length;—these, passing from time to time with their whole stock, including their houses loaded on bullocks, with flocks of goats and herds of cows, assure you of the presence of man in these deserts. I can relate no trait more extraordinary of these poor wayfarers than a continual importunity for snuff, and a very unpleasant odour from the

aforesaid woollens. There is plenty of small game on the road, and wild-boars rush across the path from time to time. We lived principally on moose-deer, partridges, and the beautiful little *sassa*.

At Aidurusso our camp was picturesquely situated in the shade of large tamarinds and bananas, the stream having widened, and the mountains disclosing their passes and being less rugged. Following the watercourse, you come on large plains, the table-land leading to the foot of the lofty ranges of Hamazain, and abounding in elephants at certain seasons. I strolled in the evening to look of some game, and on my return found the footprint of a large lion that had passed just behind us, and crossed over the rivulet. At this spot, some years before, I remember a storm that went far to equal Bruce's description, so blamed for exaggeration by some writers.

The spot we were on was just slightly raised above the bed of the torrent. We were some seven or eight in number, and had just lighted a small fire to cook our evening meal, when in a few minutes the sky was overcast, and thunder began to mutter amongst the echoing hills; big drops fell, the darkness became fearful, the thunder approached nearer and was unceasing, the rain poured, the rushing of waters began to be heard, and soon the fearfully vivid forked lightning, followed by deafening peals, showed us that we were now standing on an island, with raging torrents on each side rolling down immense waves. Within a few feet of where we stood, an elephant could not have crossed, and trees we could just see hurried past at each flash. We stood huddled together, and could not hear each other speak, with a cow-hide over us and our feet in the water, the rain pouring, and, amidst the uproar, the shrill trumpeting of the elephants made itself heard. We were glad that the waters would prevent them from disputing with us our plot of dry ground,

which is a favourite camp of theirs. The elephants of this district are particularly mischievous, on one occasion having charged and put to flight a caravan that was peacefully breakfasting here. This time, we were only disturbed by a leopard, whose eyes from time to time flashed on us like dark lanterns as he prowled round the camp, but he was too cunning for us to get a shot at him.

Here, quitting the torrent which leads to Hamazain, we mounted a small hill to the left, which places you in the plain of Chistoo, some twenty miles in width and breadth, with no water at any season, and abounding with wild beasts of every description. At the farther end of this plain is the village of Kiokhor.

The country lying on each side of the road through which we passed, is one adapted for the production of many species of grain, and of some more valuable articles of commerce. It is certain, from the nature of the Shiho tribes, that nothing could induce them to work, and their numbers are few; but the Abyssinians of Teegray, where there is question of gain, sometimes overcome even their fear of crossing the sea; and were all this land under the control of any European Power established at Massowah, it would not be difficult, by their means, to convert this howling wilderness into a smiling garden. The soil is rich, water abundant, and during the rains everything springs up with tropical luxuriance; and the climate may be inferred, when I say that many a hill is crowned by groves of stately firs or dark-browed wild olives.

A stranger might, without much difficulty, ride over Kiokhor without seeing it, except for its little church, perched on a small eminence. The houses here, as in all villages in the bordering and northern provinces of Teegray—which language is here spoken—are built so as

to resemble caves; the roofs are flat, and are loaded with shingle and earth to resist the rain; rank grasses grow luxuriantly on them, and so you see nothing but several tiers of weeds or gravel. Having found, with some difficulty, the front (which is generally used as a cow-pen), the interior of the abode strikes you in more ways than one—generally first on the head, against the lintel. Thick and ungainly posts of five to eight feet in height support the primitive roof, which must certainly have succeeded the simplest or troglodytical form of abodes; and the only light is from the door. In this darkness visible, and to save his shins, I would recommend the traveller to cling stoutly to his guide, until convoyed to a seat, however rickety—unless, indeed, he sensibly prefer, as his place of sojourn, a light and airy cow-house.

Your eyes in a quarter of an hour become accustomed to the cavernous gloom, and the stranger will probably first endeavour to discover the cause of an unceasing noise proceeding from the darkest corner: this is the goodwife, on her knees, or stooping, grinding corn, betwixt two stones—the under one heavy, the upper light and moveable. Her dress is little better than that of the Shiho women. The furniture consists of stools of queer shapes; earthen jars (for beer, for water, or for cooking), of innumerable sizes and singular appearance; rickety four-legged bedsteads, of the smallest dimensions; children without end, all naked and squalling; cocks that crow perpetually; goats, or rather kids, that continually cry; and dirt *ad libitum*, dust under foot, and large soot-flakes overhead, as your turban soon testifies.

After leaving Kiokhor, on the road to Adowah, you again mount to a higher level, and after crossing the River Marubb—here a small stream of fifteen feet in width,

rocky, and quite dry in the hot season—Khoda Felassee is reached. This is a considerable market town, situated in a vast and bleak plain, with an English climate in April, and, I believe, about 4,000 feet above the sea-level. Here is some indication of an improved taste in building—namely, a large church, and houses, some built of stone with flat sloping roofs, others again of wood, all of the same round shape. This market is furnished with supplies of all kinds, one day in the week, from every quarter of the provinces of Hamazain, Serawee, and Kalagooza, and even as far as Adowah. It is, moreover, supported in great measure, in a certain degree of prosperity, by being the great emporium for kidnapping slaves—that is, stealing Christians, and selling them as Gallas at Massowah, of which I shall say more in another place; merely mentioning here, that I laid this fact distinctly before Dejajmatch Oobeay, the chief of Teegray, with the remedy, but could not rouse him to adopt it.

The country here is in great measure cultivated with barley, until you reach Goondet, situated in an immense and hot plain, that recals Massowah, and through which flows again the Marubb, that has made a large circuit, and is now hurrying to the country of the Shankallas, and thence to the Takazzee, far to the north. This arid plain, covered with thorn-bushes, is some thirty miles in width, and affords a pasturage to innumerable flocks and herds, nearly all white; though a cow of any other part of the country would assuredly die of inanition in a week in the dry season, there being no grass, and the cattle eating leaves like goats. Excepting the Marubb, there is water only at one spot where wells have been dug, and where the operation of giving drink to the cattle is carried on, night and day most unceasingly, by numerous half-naked boys and girls—the former generally

armed with lances, and sometimes shields. Lions abound, but seldom attack the human race, and many are killed by the natives of Goondet, who encounter them fearlessly enough.

We encamped at the Marubb, a perfect wilderness; and my party being numerous, no precaution was taken but to collect plenty of firewood, though I ordered a strict watch to be kept, the order least obeyed of any you can give: it is, indeed, nearly hopeless, the sleepiness of an Abyssinian being portentous, and scarcely to be resisted by him under penalty of death—his insensibility, to all earthly noises and efforts to rouse him, when once asleep, being stonelike. Fortunately, a friendly lion, about nine o'clock, gave unmistakable signs of his neighbourhood; some requested permission to fire guns to scare him away, which I refused; and the night being dark, fires were lighted, and regular watch kept, so that I was relieved from all apprehension of thieves. With the amount of property I had with me, and a native staff of ragamuffins only (except Coffin, the former favourite of Ras Welda Selasee, whom I had engaged to accompany us as far as Adowah), this was no small consideration; and it so happened that a notorious thief and robber by profession was lurking in the neighbourhood, with whom I had the pleasure of making acquaintance on the morrow.

Previous to scaling another hill, I rested till the afternoon; and at breakfast time, came the freebooter, Ficra, Yesoos (*Love of Jesus*) by name, with one or two followers, and a large elephant-gun, leaving doubtless a sufficient force within hail; for it was his custom to represent himself to the caravans here as an authorised collector of duties, to which, as the alternative was to be plundered, the merchants and some Europeans submitted gracefully. I bade him be seated, and gave him breakfast, plying

him with mead, which no Abyssinian can resist, whilst his brother appeared to be taking a mental inventory of my stock. During this time I ordered quiet preparations to be made for starting. Presently the thief started up, and brought forward a jar of white honey, of which he begged my acceptance, an instant return in specie being of course expected. I caused some delay by feigning not to understand the Teegray, and afterwards, without accepting or refusing, told him that I could not remain seated if he stood up; when, imagining that I was about to accept the Grecian gift, he remained quiet, drinking the large horns with which my servant plied him. My heavy baggage moved up the hill, and gradually, without bustle, I found myself with only active and armed men, some five or six fowling-pieces, and a few shields.

My friend often began a fresh strain of eloquence, but I affected not to hear or understand him, only begging him to drink by the most amicable signs. Cloths were fastened round us like curtains, in the Abyssinian fashion, so that he saw little of what was passing outside. My suite having had half an hour's start, I rose and went to my mule, and, to the horror and surprise of my gentle thief, he saw nothing but a prospect of cold iron and lead, instead of the dollars he coveted. 'But won't you accept the honey?' he said. 'Bring it to my house in Adowah,' I replied (where he dared not come), and rode off, amidst a burst of laughter from my followers, leaving him with his honey-pot, staring after me motionless as long as I was in sight. The rascal was an unscrupulous and bold levier of blackmail, in defiance of Oobeay; and if any stranger should pass, his servants would be the first to recommend the payment of a handsome douceur as a peace-offering, that would serve themselves on future occasions.

We slept on the top of the hill, from whence Adowah

is only four hours' journey; and having exhausted our provisions, we had no supper. Here commences in this direction Central Teegray, and from hence to Adowah nearly the whole country belongs, of ancient right, to the Aboona, or High Priest, who had indeed, in ancient times, the princely appanage of one-third of the lands of Abyssinia. Our entrance into Adowah was sufficiently noisy and tumultuous; nearly the whole town turned out to witness my arrival, and all that could muster beasts, joined me at a mile or two from the town. The Negadeh Ras sent his son to pay homage. A house had been ready for me for some time, into which my baggage had preceded me, unquestioned. The dust was stifling, and, to torment me more, I heard, amidst the tumult, the fiddles and noise of the Asmarees and Mungerash, male and female public singers, my especial aversion; and putting my good mule to its best amble, I fondly hoped to enter my abode and shut the door. Vain desire! Such is fame! Private entrances were discovered, walls were scaled, the singers entered pell-mell with me, and a stalwart and fierce warrior, whom I knew not, but of whom more hereafter, seated himself just opposite me on a package. I was on a couch, and trying hard to look grave and stately; the courtyard was crowded, and the din and disorder intolerable. My suite, driven to despair, took to their sticks, and drove out the populace; the singers, who must be soothed, were got rid of by solemn promises of admitting them in the evening; the warrior was promised an interview the next day; and my numerous friends, 'pour les beaux yeux de ma cassette,' gradually withdrew, and I could breathe. Such is popularity in Abyssinia!

On looking around the apartment, there were already piles and piles of bread, unnumbered cooked fowls, and jars of beer of portentous dimensions, whose owners and

presenters had screamed out their names, and been summarily jostled out thereafter. I then appointed strong doorkeepers, arranged my property in a small inner room with a guard, and loosened a large English mastiff, that would have saved me much trouble had he not been, unfortunately, sick and footsore. Dejajmatch Oobeay had ordered that I and my followers should be fed at the expense of the town. This is the custom throughout Abyssinia, even without orders, for *one* day, but now was unlimited, except at my pleasure. Seeing that each one in Abyssinia must buy his corn, grind it, sift it, and bake it; that female servants must be found, as men would starve rather than do this work; that he must kill his own sheep or oxen, draw water from the river (which also is only done by women); and that nothing can be purchased except once a week at the market, it is obvious that, without some such law of accommodation, a traveller would more often fast than feast, though he had the wealth of Crœsus, and were he native or foreigner. As, however, I had no wish to oppress the inhabitants, and there was no possible means of compensating the 5,000 individuals, who were to furnish us with what might amount, at the utmost, to three or four dollars a day, I limited the billeting to three days, the shortest time in which I could procure female domestics, jars, grindstones, and corn.

On the day after my arrival, I heard that, as I ascended the mountains to Kiokhor by one road, the army of Oobeay had poured down by another, plundering the whole country as far as Dohona; that the French vice-consul at Monkooloo had escaped, after gallantly remaining the last man in the village; and that my house there was burnt to the ground, though I suspect, from what I afterwards learnt, not by the Abyssinian troops. It was tolerably lucky that I started when I did, in spite

of my ill-health, and that I did not encounter the military torrent on the road, as, if I had not lost my life, I should infallibly have lost the whole of my own and the Government property, and many valuable papers. Circumstances often baffle, and sometimes aid us; and if ever I was disposed to have a superstitious confidence in my star, it would have been on this occasion.

The town of Adowah, one of the most busy in Abyssinia, is prettily situated: there is a small extent of well-cultivated fields around it, and on one side an extensive marsh, the head of a small and turbulent river, that runs at the foot of the buildings; this marsh, which is always green, supplies with food numberless mules and horses. Rising on every side are mountains of the most picturesque forms imaginable, and, towering above all, some ten miles distant, is Samagata (the 'Sky-viewer,' as it might be translated), a bold abrupt rock, rising 2,000 feet from the plain, its top frequently shrouded in mist, and with strongly-marked precipices on all its sides.

Shorlida, close to Adowah, resembling the Rock of Gibraltar, though on a smaller scale, and Abba Gareema, a bold and singular peak, on whose side nestles a snug and holy monastery, form, with numerous other hills, the most agreeable diversity of colour and shape. From these hills, in the rainy season, pour down cascades and rills, that swell the gurgling brook Assa, at the foot of the town, into a turbid and dangerous torrent, where lives are frequently lost; as in this very peculiar country a thousand lives yearly might be thus sacrificed, and no one would think of building a bridge of any kind. If you suggested such a thing, the proposal would be received with a shrug, and an intimation that it is nobody's business, and that they are quite content to cross, or to be drowned, as were their fathers. And here I may observe that the Abyssinian character has a strong dash

of the ancient Jewish in these things—their inveterate aversion to any change, their inconceivable love of litigation, and their wonderful *obstinacy* in trifles—which caused the entire failure of all misions, Catholic or Protestant, and even of Harris's splendid embassy to Shoa.

CHAPTER XIX.

MISSION TO RAS ALI—*continued.*

DOUBTS OF OOBEAY—START FOR HIS RESIDENCE AT MAITALO—SEE OOBEAY—HIS CAREER AND CHARACTER—RETURN TO ADOWAH—AXUM—CROSS THE TAKAZZEE—SECOND VISIT TO OOBEAY—GRACIOUSLY RECEIVED—MOUNTAIN RANGES OF SEMEN—WAGGERA—DUBARUK—INTELLIGENCE OF A PLOT—CROSS INTO THE PROVINCE OF KIMFAZ—BEGGALA—BELLASA—ARRIVE AT DEVRA TABOR.

THE territories of Dejaj Oobeay, the ruler of Teegray, extend from Kiokhor to near Gondar, and from Lasta to the Shankalla and the Egyptian pachalic of Sennaar. It will be seen, therefore, that it was impossible to reach the Ras Ali except through the dominions of Oobeay, and I was charged with property that might well tempt an unscrupulous Abyssinian. This great chief can take the field with 40,000 fighting men, of whom 8,000 are matchlocks and 4,000 horse, and governs his principalities with absolute authority: he must, however, be considered as subject to Ras Ali, to whom he pays an annual tribute of 8,000 dollars as his feudal superior.

Whilst revolving these things in my mind, the unknown warrior previously mentioned was admitted to an interview, and told me his tale. He had fallen under the displeasure of Oobeay, and, having timely warning, had escaped on horseback into the *geddam* Adowah, where even Oobeay could not seize him; nor did it appear that his offence was serious or unpardonable; but as the lord of Teegray is an implacable man, all efforts to obtain his

pardon had been useless, and he now lived almost on charity—having expended all he had, after their custom, in eating and drinking. He was a man with many connections in the camp, and now begged me, for the love of Christ, the Virgin, &c. &c., to use my influence, which he assured me was unparalleled, to which I consented.

Oobeay was at this time residing at Maitalo, in Semen; and it being necessary to hasten my movements—as I had heard that the Ras was about to make a campaign into Gojam against Bourroo Goscho, and knew by experience that the rear of an invading army in Abyssinia is cut off from all communication, and that for months I might not be able to join him—I determined to see Oobeay, and judge personally of his real intentions and feelings towards me, for little can you rely on the assertions of an Abyssinian. I therefore started, although suffering from a violent attack of dysentery, and the road was, perhaps, the most fatiguing in Abyssinia. An European physician would have pronounced me mad, and perhaps so will the reader, when I mention, once for all, that the journey occupied me seven days going and returning (the distance being 300 miles, or more), over rugged roads, many parts of which must be traversed on foot; and that during that time I tasted no food, save for three days at Maitalo, a horn of boiled linseed with honey. My principal diet was Jeremie's opiate (until the bottle was broken), as it relieved me from pain, and I was exposed to the most burning as well as to the coldest climates.

The road from Adowah leading to Maitalo passes at first through a cool and smiling country, one of the best cultivated in Abyssinia, but singularly destitute of trees—a fault in most Abyssinian landscapes. You pass through fine grass-meadows, and in front of you rise the lofty peaks of Semen, crowned with fortresses, and glittering in the noonday sun, or black with storms and mist. On

arriving at the district called Turfura, you have to descend a precipitous hill on foot, and you then are in a wide and hot valley, filled with jungle, and abounding in wild beasts. Soon, however, you arrive at a delicious and sparkling stream, whose waters gurgle under the shade of lofty and spreading sycamores; the eye, heated with the glare, rests delighted on the dark foliage; and the traveller, sinking on the soft grass by the rivulet, may recall far dearer scenes, or, in another mood, shout fiercely for such breakfast as he may have carried with him.

Thanks to the vigour of Oobeay, I believe the roads through his territories were as safe as in any part of England—*i.e.*, from the Marubb river to Gondar. We went by the way of Chilachacumy, one of the several fords of the River Takazzee. This river, having its course here in a north-westerly direction, plunges through a deep and gloomy valley, to which leads a precipitous road or path, of 2,000 feet in depth. In the hot season it is nearly dry in many parts, with here and there deep holes, in which lodge numberless hippopotami and crocodiles; these latter, in some seasons, become fierce and dangerous to those who cross, even at the fords. In the rains from July to October, a strong and turbid current rolls with resistless force, and, widening as it advances, passes through the country of the Shankallas, to the northward, and then through Taka, when its valley is called El-Gasch; after which, turning more westerly, it joins the Blue Nile, and lends a powerful impulse to the periodical floods of Egypt. When we crossed, the stream was clear, and about two feet in depth. Both the descent, and a similar ascent on the other side, I had to perform on foot, but I shall not dwell on my fatigues.

The narrow province on the other side of the Takazzee is called Telemt. On quitting it, another hill of 1,500 feet carries the traveller to the first plateau of Semen,

the natal province of Oobeay, from whence, looking back, you behold all Teegray, as it were, at your feet, with mountains on mountains piled, bare rocks shooting bold pinnacles into the sky, and pyramids, pillars, and rugged crags in endless confusion and variety; the pencil could alone do justice to Abyssinian scenery—and I proceed on my journey. Semen, a Switzerland in miniature, is aptly described by an Abyssinian proverb—'God has given mules, but no roads to ride on;' and you must be an experienced pedestrian to avoid a broken ankle, in ascending and descending its steep and stony pathways.

From Addislab, a village overhung by enormous and bold rocks—whose strange pinnacles are said by the inhabitants to have been men, transformed suddenly by Almighty wrath for their daring and frivolities, a tale perhaps as old as the Deluge—a curious path leads to Maitalo, still under the brow of overshadowing mountains. Along the mountain-side for some ten miles is a thick wood, where the nightingale may be heard at noon, and no glimpse of the sun ever dries the muddy grounds; the trees, covered with moss, drip, drip all the day, and a hundred small rills, fed by the thick mists and heavy dews, trickle through the brushwood; they descend, in thin dreary falls, to search a warmer and more agreeable climate, in the glowing and sunny fields of Kwollaggeria, which lie immediately below your feet, in strange contrast to the cold freezing atmosphere from which you regard it. Through this wood, riding is impossible, owing to the quantity of fallen trees, under which you must creep, or leap as you can, varied with, occasionally, a thorn in your eyes, or a blow on the knee from an unseen stump. The only chance of a decent ride in Abyssinia is when Oobeay has made a progress, as he orders, in ancient Scripture style, 'that his way be made straight before him;' and thorns are levelled, roads

patched, and bridges thrown over rivulets, to the great comfort of the human race. I gladly emerged from this cold, slippery, and dark passage to the light and gay landscape beyond, and, very tired and worn-out, I arrived at Maitalo amidst the din and bustle of an Abyssinian camp—to me no novelty, but most puzzling to a stranger. I call it camp, though the chief has a regular residence here, because the greater part of the town is formed of temporary huts built by his soldiers (the number of settled inhabitants being very few), and also to distinguish it from the *geddam*, a quarter which is under the control of the Church.

It was too late to see Oobeay, but his household is well regulated, and his men, though insolent, know their duty. Some eunuchs of his treasury have the ordering of domestic matters. All strangers receive supper and house, according to their rank, and the consideration in which they are held by the chief. Every person on his first visit to Oobeay receives a *Baldarabba*—that is, some officer of the household, who is appointed to receive him, to inform Oobeay of his arrival, to take messages for him, to assist him in his affairs at court, and moreover to get as much out of him as possible. The visitor is also called a *Baldarabba*, and Oobeay hands over the richest to his favourites, knowing that they will make a handsome thing by them. Europeans are particularly sought for. Oobeay likewise appoints the order of his first evening's reception himself, and so well does he arrange matters, and so feared is he, that, amidst the daily confusion of hundreds of arrivals, each one receives on each occasion the exact supper that was ordered at first, and that after years of absence—this chief never ordering a second time for one person, except it be to increase his *doorgo*, or allowance.

I had no *Baldarabba* on this occasion, but I was well

known to many in the camp, and great zeal was manifested to procure me a lodging. This—wonderful to say, tolerably free of fleas—was a round hut about fifteen feet in diameter, with a pyramidal roof, the materials sticks and dry grass, with a bed of the latter on the floor for myself. A fat cow came in immediately, with bread, mead, beer, wood for fire, straw for my mule, and a cook-maid to prepare my supper. As I tasted nothing, I left Coffin and my suite to do as they pleased with this munificent banquet; and the cook-maid reported my illness to her master, it being evident to an Abyssinian that a man who will neither eat nor drink must be *in articulo mortis*. The next morning, very early, the chief showed his consideration by sending me the sovereign remedy of linseed and honey, prepared by himself, pressing me to drink it 'by his death,' whereby I was highly honoured, and found that it did me some good.

The third day I was told that Oobeay was to be seen, and, though extremely weak—the dysentery not ceasing—I dressed, and went to the palace. This is a large court surrounded with a circular stone wall some ten feet high, enclosing many houses, each of a single room—some built of stone, some of wood, and all thatched. Abyssinian houses have no windows generally, but two large doors. There is a porter's lodge at the gateway, wherein all persons are obliged to leave their swords; after this comes an open space covered with weeds—then a large anteroom, swarming with pages, eunuchs, dirty little boys playing about, and people rushing in and out on different duties. Passing from this, I entered Oobeay's apartment of reception, where a silence reigns strongly contrasted with the bustle without. Each man, as he enters, arranges his cloth at the door, almost stops his breath, and you would hardly think him the same man you heard shouting, abusing, and swearing just before. Some people are

standing up before him, pleading—it being a fast-day—and some of his chief officers are stationed about, with two or three favourite eunuchs. Two old men are sitting—great favourites—and give their advice on each case, Oobeay seldom speaking, but allowing them to settle it, except when he perceives some falsehood or byplay, when he shows that he has been listening to some purpose, by a quiet, vigorous, and clear decision.

As I entered, everyone was bundled out, and I was seated on a carpet on the floor close to Oobeay's couch. He sat perched between two enormous cushions covered with silk, on which he reclined alternately; two officers of rank, at the head and foot of the couch, chased the flies with whisks of cows' tails; and a large and clear wood-fire blazed in the centre of the room, of which the floor was strewn with green rushes. Myself familiar with this chief, whom few approach without trembling, some short account of the man, his character and fortunes, may not be uninteresting to the reader.

Dejajmatch Oobeay was the younger son of a celebrated warrior, Hilo Maria, whose ancestors had for some generations ruled the province of Semen. At the time of his father's death he was a boy, governing the province of Walkait, recovered by his father's prowess from the chief of Teegray, with whom existed a ceaseless feud and warfare. His father, who despised him, in dying left his *wombar* or throne to his eldest son, then with him in Semen. But there was an old man, favoured of the family for many years, who had nursed Oobeay, and saw those vigorous qualities that had escaped others less penetrating. He sent an express for his young favourite, promising him his support, and exhorting him to seize upon that for which he was well fitted. Oobeay, with the decision which even at that early age marked him, instantly started for Semen; and travelling day and

night, far outstripping his followers, himself half-frozen and half-starved, arrived in a wonderfully short time at the town, where his old tutor, Madge Welda Kheda, was expecting him. A small troop was assembled during the night, and without pause, Oobeay, the next day, presented himself in his brother's camp, seized him without opposition, and proclaimed himself his father's successor: his brother, a weak and timid man, then politely resigned, and was contemptuously set at liberty, promising to obey in all things, which promise he keeps to this day.

Oobeay, however, had immediately another danger to encounter. A great chief of Telemt raised the standard of revolt, and placed himself at the head of a well-appointed army, with above a thousand matchlocks, some horse, and seven *negaretes*, being a chief of the highest rank. Oobeay's forces were a few soldiers (whom he scarcely knew), sixteen matchlocks, and three horsemen. With his characteristic boldness, he advanced against the rebel. To a suggestion of Welda Kheda, that they had better retreat, collect men, and organise the army, he replied—'When I retreat from my father's land, may it be to my grave!'—and attacked them; and whether he paralysed them by his boldness, or that fortune favoured him, he routed them completely, with great slaughter, took all the *negaretes*, most of the matchlocks, and the rebel chief, prisoners. Oobeay confined him in chains in the hill-fort, which his father's guardian had given up to him; and there he remains in chains to this day, now seven-and-twenty years, bowed with age and misfortune, a singular memorial of Oobeay's daring, and the inflexible firmness of his character.

With wealth, with arms, and youthful vigour, Oobeay now organised a fine army, and secretly meditated plans dictated by a vast ambition; for his was a nature to be all, or nothing. We find him following the Ras Imam

on an expedition as far as the Kootlai Gallas, not yet being strong enough to throw off the yoke. On his return, however, and after the death of that king, he threw off his allegiance, and openly defied the Ras Mariée, and fought a desperate battle with him at Shoada (a fertile valley at the foot of the Semen range to the southward), against overwhelming numbers, but being defeated he escaped to Semen. The Ras Mariée, a noble and generous Galla, shortly afterwards, however, having other views, not only made peace with Oobeay, but raised him to the dignity of his son-in-law.

Oobeay next quarrelled with Dejaj Komfoo, chief of Kwora—famous in Egypt as having defeated a Turkish force sent to invade Abyssinia—and encountering his troops, defeated them completely, taking large spoil of matchlocks and accoutrements. The Ras Mariée was now excited, by the cunning though youthful Oobeay, to great wrath against Dejajmatch Sabagardis, the absolute ruler of Teegray, who had plundered and burnt some provinces of Semen. He collected all his forces from the borders of Shoa—thousands on thousands of wild Galla horse, burning for the reputed wealth of Teegray; and, guided by Oobeay, he poured them like a cataract down the only path practicable for an army—the famous hill of Lemalmon, in Waggera.

The path generally admits only one at a time, some portions being on the brink of awful precipices; and fearful was the sacrifice of life, when horse and foot, men, women, baggage, and children, pressed madly down their slopes without precaution or order. But little cares an Abyssinian chief for human life, and the casualties of the day become a joke for the evening watch-fire. From the top of Lemalmon, gazing down on Kwollaggeria and Walkait, 3,000 feet below, melting into a dim mist at a distance of a hundred miles, and on the fertile

plain of Shiré in Teegray, and the valleys of the Shankallas—the Gallas, seeing the endless variety of hill and dale, said that Allah, after making this country, had slashed it in pieces with his sword, in contrast to their own magnificent and grassy plains; but on the plateau where they stood, there was more room to gallop than they anticipated, and rich stores of corn repaid their labours.

The Ras pressed on, breathing revenge, and sparing nothing in his road: indeed, once set in motion, his army could scarce be controlled, and, having been allowed to pass the Takazzee unopposed, he encountered Sabagardis on the other side, at Mai-slan-Mai, in one of the famous battles of Abyssinia, which affected in its result even the British connection with that country. Oobeay alone profited by it: the Ras Mariée was killed, at the commencement of the battle, by Dejaj Hagoos, son of Sabagardis. Hagoos himself was afterwards slain, and the Gallas, concealing the death of their chief, pushed on and gained a complete victory, taking Sabagardis prisoner. This chief was put to death the next day, at the instigation of Oobeay, as a sacrifice to the manes of the Ras, and the new Ras Dorié conferred Teegray on Oobeay himself. Sabagardis was friendly to the English, and at the time of his death, Mr. Coffin was absent in England, on a mission to effect a more perfect alliance, when that unfortunate occurrence put an end to the negotiation.

Of the difficulty of opening any communication with Abyssinia, every page of her history affords a proof; and it can only be done by seizing some fortunate moment, when a chief of enlarged mind and unsuspicious disposition, and alive to the benefits he will gain, is possessed of power; or else by occupying some harbour on the coast, where the influence of commerce and mutual interests would speedily change the national character.

Oobeay, being a bold man, pushed on into Teegray with a small force; but, finding that the sons of Sabagardis were still too powerful for him, he retired into Semen for a time; he there employed himself, with success, in sowing discord amongst the various chiefs of Teegray. When he reappeared in the field, he was so powerful, and had so many adherents in the country itself (the people of Teegray being remarkable for their shortsightedness and violence), that he forced Kasai,* the son of Sabagardis, to compound a peace, on the dishonourable condition of receiving the country as the governor appointed by Oobeay. He swore to these conditions, and, as might be expected, soon after broke his faith, and began to attack the Amharas. Oobeay, having gathered large forces, advanced to meet him, and defeated him at the Battle of Furrus Mai, Kasai escaping into a mountain stronghold. Here he was soon forced, by a stratagem, to surrender himself, and Oobeay, saying he would keep no faith with one who had broken his oath, chained him, and in those chains he remains, now thirteen years.

Oobeay, soon after this, received the submission of the greater part of Teegray, though some chiefs, aided by the strength of their hills and forests, held out for years.

Now the Aboona Salama, Coptic high-priest of Gondar, had been for some time instigating Oobeay, and also a chief of Gojam (the famous warrior, Bourroo Goscho), to rebel against the Ras Ali, then a young man of some twenty-one years of age. Oobeay, puffed up with vanity, and thinking that now no enemy could cope with him, acceded, and Bourroo was glad to see these two powerful chiefs weaken each other. Oobeay therefore, taking the Aboona with him, and leaving Teegray to its fate under a governor, the Nebreed Welda Selassee, poured his forces

* Now (1868) in rebellion against King Theodorus, and occupying the province of Teegray.

into Begemder, and was there joined by Bourroo with a powerful army from Gojam. The Ras, who had just commenced a campaign against Bourroo, now hurried back.

Proclamation was made that Oobeay wished to reinstate the lawful descendant of the Emperors of Gondar on his throne; that, moreover, the Ras was a Mussulman in his heart, and would corrupt the religion of Abyssinia (which at that time was true); and the Aboona added his interdict on all who followed the Ras, and his blessing on all who joined Oobeay. Now, the Ras's wife was Oobeay's daughter, and had taken refuge in the holy city of Mahadera Mariam. Oobeay, to place eternal enmity between Bourroo and the Ras, forced the priest to deliver up his daughter; and he gave her to Bourroo, who, being a daring and ambitious man, accepted her, being himself married to the Ras's sister. All this time Oobeay had the intention, on gaining the battle, of immediately chaining Bourroo.

They met at Devra Tabor, and, after a very poor battle, the Ras took to flight, and never stopped till he reached his native country of Worroheimano. Whilst Oobeay's troops were thus apparently victorious, Bourroo Goscho, on the left flank, seeing that the Ras had fled, and knowing pretty well Oobeay's kind intentions towards himself, feigned a panic, and fled with all his horse. A chief of the Ras who had fought well, named Birro Aligas, finding this part of the field unprotected, advanced at a gallop towards the quarters of Oobeay, with the intention of surrendering himself. On arriving there he found Oobeay pretty drunk, and with only about two hundred men; he therefore, instead of surrendering, charged, and took Oobeay prisoner, with the Aboona, and others. This news, spreading about the field, changed the fortune of the day, and the victors became captives. For seven days the

household troops of the Ras, under the command of his grandmother, kept order; and at the instant of his reappearance, Dejaj Farris, from Aijjo, appeared with his army on the opposite hill, having come with the intention to seize the disputed throne. When, however, he saw the Ras just entering, amidst acclamations, he lost heart, and fled again to Aijjo without risking a contest.

Oobeay was now chained, and Teegray of course had revolted, headed by the very governor he had left, and by another chief, nephew of Sabagardis, named Balgudda Arega. Soon, however, by means of gold lavished amongst the favourites of the Ras, he persuaded that chief not only to set him free, but to reinstate him in all his former authority.

In the meantime a new danger had arisen in his path; his brother, Dejaj Merso, the most dashing and fearless soldier in Abyssinia, had, in spite of the Ras's orders, taken possession of Oobeay's province of Semen, and swore to keep it; so that when Oobeay returned, to take possession, he was so hotly opposed that he was beaten, and forced to retire to the highlands. Whilst in this difficulty—without men, without provisions, and fully expecting to be attacked on the morrow by the forces of Merso, already flushed with victory—he saw in the evening the fires of a large camp near him. This was the Ras, who, himself fearing Dejaj Merso, had arrived by forced marches to the succour of his quondam rebellious vassal. Merso, noways daunted, early in the morning forced his way up the hill in the face of both armies, in spite of the cold, which was freezing to men almost bare; and he was on the point of gaining the victory, when a gunner of the Ras, by a lucky shot, killed his brave leader of the advance-guard, whereupon the army lost heart, and few escaped save Merso himself, who seemed to bear a charmed life.

The Ras returned to Begemder, and Oobeay, without pause or hesitation, with scarcely 500 men, with no guns and no horse, pushed into Teegray; and such was the terror of his name and fortune there, and the division amongst the chiefs of Teegray, that the army of Balgudda Arega melted away without even a struggle. After this, Oobeay, either himself or by his generals, vanquished every province of Teegray, and reigned in tranquillity, having executed many, and imprisoned more. The rebellious governor was taken and put to death, and no man of note of Teegray birth was spared. Balgudda only held out for ten years longer, and, having now voluntarily yielded himself, is in high favour and place under Oobeay.

About six years since, Oobeay, on some question of the tribute he should pay, again raised a rebellion against the Ras; but the Ras, hastening from Gojam, camped in Waggera, and reduced Oobeay to reason, without coming into actual collision. He has since, with the exception of the tribute he pays the Ras yearly, and an occasional quota of troops, governed the whole country from Gondar to near Massowah, and the people of Teegray are now completely subdued and tranquil.

I will not speak of the numerous expeditions he has made against the bordering tribes of Taltals, Agobo Gallas, Shankallas, Shihos, &c., but proceed to give some personal description of a man who, for an Abyssinian, was a remarkable character.

Dejaj Oobeay is some fifty-five years of age, grave in manner, and of a piercing eye, silent and reserved, and much feared by all who approach him. He has no liveliness in his conversation, and is cold to strangers, but in business quick, decided, and precise. Terse in his answers, he dislikes long letters, circumlocution, or hesitation, and prefers to despatch all business, if possible, personally. He is implacable to his enemies, but staunch to his friends, and in

general strictly just. He has ambition and pride in a large share; is not readily liberal, but when he gives, it is with a lavish hand; is fond of hoarding, but knows when to be generous; his word once passed is to be trusted, but he will not pardon the smallest deviation in another, even if involuntary; he governs with a firm hand, and his country is wonderfully quiet, considering the feudal system that prevails. He is not personally brave in war, but is a good general, has a quick and almost unerring perception of individual character, is extremely patient and foreseeing, and I should say, comparing small things to great, in many points might be likened to Tiberius Cæsar. He is fond of the pleasures of the table, and greatly given to sensuality.

In person he is small, with thin lips, a piercing voice, a quick and rapid elocution; a face admired in Abyssinia, with a straight nose and European features, but no physical strength.

Oobeay was very gracious, and, after some chat, I asked for the pardon of Tokee Tasho, and with some little difficulty obtained it. Oobeay then begged me to stay till I was quite cured; however, as I hoped to obtain some medicine in Adowah, and the advice of my companion Barroni, I preferred to return.

We started the next morning by another road, which, by one descent from Maitalo, took us into the Valley of Telemt. We recrossed the Takazzee at Adayt, and from thence to Adowah I arrived in one day, about 60 miles; and finding myself, strange to say, the better for such violent exertion, for the first time tasted substantial food. Oobeay had given me a trusty servant, with orders to convey me to the border of his dominions, and to furnish me with lodgings and provisions on the road. To purchase anything in Abyssinia on the moment is, as I have before said, impossible.

Now, considering the jealousy of Oobeay and the Ras Ali, the merely nominal subjection of the former, and the value of my property (trebled by report), this negotiation must be considered to have been delicate and successful.

Amidst the preparations for the journey, my illness increased in violence; and mere pain having deprived me of sleep for five days, I took opium, which had an effect so violent on my constitution, that I was for the space of twelve hours as a man poisoned, and in some danger. Being somewhat recovered by mustard-baths and other applications—though, as may be supposed, I could hardly sit a mule—I recommenced my journey by an easy jaunt of six or eight miles. I had some fifteen beasts of burden, and about thirty porters, and altogether 150 or more people, of one kind and another. The warrior Tasho also accompanied me. From that day, singularly enough, my illness began to abate, and ten days after, always journeying by small stages, I was quite cured.

Our second day's journey was to Axum, the ancient capital of Abyssinia, the seat also of the Governor of the Ptolemies. This town is strewn with fallen obelisks and remains, one very fine one standing; the inscriptions are few, but, were it not for the obstinate bigotry of the priests, by search and excavation, much might be found to throw light upon the ancient state of Abyssinia and Ethiopia. This bigotry is at present insurmountable by any means. Oobeay himself would not dare to give an order for any such pursuit, and should he dare, so great an odium would attack the venturous stranger, that it must obviously be the task of an independent traveller, and not of one whose duty is to conciliate, if possible, the goodwill and respect of this strange and ignorant people.

Axum is beautifully situated: in front a vast plain,

richly cultivated with many sorts of grain, and near the town grass-plots and meadows. A cold breeze and a clear air in the summer are always found here; behind, the town is sheltered by hills, where, amidst huge blocks of stone and large sycamores, the smoke of cottages peeps out. Hard by the obelisk are two huge and ancient sycamores, in whose shade a regiment might repose; the church (whose large courts and fine flight of steps proclaim a state of civilisation far different from the semi-barbarism that is now, hourly, casting a darker cloud over this land) is embowered in trees of various foliage, and at some distance the Church of St. John is perched on a peaked and wooded hill.

I will not fatigue the reader with a description of each night's arrangements: beer in large quantities, bread *ad libitum*, sometimes a cow, sometimes a sheep or a goat, were nightly furnished, to the great enjoyment of my suite. The journey took us through the fertile province of Shiré (Bruce's route to Gondar)—the climate mild, no hills, but a gentle slope till you arrive near the Takazzee. Here the descent is less precipitous, but, on account of my baggage, I preferred to leave them there encamped at the river, while I took the porters and most of the men to a village on the other bank, after ascending some 2,000 feet. At the river they found a large quantity of wild honey, in drinking which they passed the night happily. There are here some splendid tamarind-trees, and the river, being less confined than at the upper crossings, is more picturesque. My baggage joined me the next morning, as appointed, at the top of the hill, and we camped at a pretty spot called Mai Eyn, that the mules might get grass. Here I was joined by Kidna Maria, one of the wealthiest merchants of Abyssinia. My tent was pitched, and we enjoyed a pleasant day, my health being now restored.

Close by this place there is a singular country; the ground is covered with masses of stone, twenty or thirty feet in height, so that you proceed by leaping across the chasms between them. Here boa-constrictors of great magnitude are found; I killed a young one. Lions, that abound here, sleep in the cool shade of these rocks, and there is game in abundance. It is a wild scene, and continues so for many miles. At times, when Abyssinia is much disturbed, bands of Shankallas lurk in these fastnesses, to cut off merchants and travellers; and there is record of a famous fight at a river some miles from this, where the Shankallas were all slain, and but two of the merchants left alive. Since then none encamp at that river. In all these waters, moreover, there are crocodiles, but small in size.

I now determined to leave my suite, to proceed alone, and with a few men to visit Oobeay again—partly from policy, to strengthen my amity with him by this flattery; and partly to obtain a more full pardon for my friend Tasho, who, as I have said, was with me. In the evening, therefore, with Kidna Maria, and a dozen or so of servants, we started for Maitalo.

We had sent on Oobeay's servants and some men to prepare a house, but the question was how to find them. A glorious full-moon fortunately assisted us, but we soon found ourselves in a waste of luxuriant grass and jungle, with no trace of a road. We wandered on, and presently found a man watching corn; this they do seated on a platform some twenty feet high, for fear of lions; and with a sling they drive away their numerous nightly foes—wild-boars, *agazins*, porcupines, monkeys, &c. When he heard our names he came down from his perch, and we persuaded him to guide us to a road. This he did, and on coming to two roads, told us that either would lead us to a village; but that both were infested by lions, and he

must leave us. We fired a pistol, but heard no answer from our people, and so took our chance, and about ten o'clock at night stumbled on a village; here we very narrowly escaped a fight with a half-drunken villager, who objected to being roused at night, and we finally slept, supperless and fireless, in a wretched hut. From here the road to Maitalo passes through the town of Addosennee, and is one steep and continuous hill, gradually rising to a height, it maybe, of some 4,000 feet; halfway up this we found our people and our provisions, at a little stream that came trickling down from the chilly mountains above us. Under a tree we made an excellent breakfast; and with considerable toil, as part of the hill was too steep to ride, and I was yet little fit for walking, we arrived at sunset at Maitalo.

Here we were received with a volley of abuse by an eunuch at the door of the palace, for not coming earlier, which kindness I repaid him another day, when, being in disgrace with Oobeay, he wished me to intercede for him. A cow, however, and everything proper came for our supper, which cow was slain by moonlight, and devoured by my hungry followers.

The next morning I saw Oobeay, who was much pleased with my visit, and made peace for my friend the warrior. He was called in, and appeared, carrying a large stone on his neck, in token of humility, and, bared to the waist, knelt down on the threshold; he was then forgiven, and reinstated in his former post, villages, &c.

We left the camp on the road for Gondar; but Oobeay had, as a precaution against the Ras, cut away the old road that I knew before, and which passed through a doorway always guarded. The whole of Semen could, in fact, be made one vast fortress, so mountainous and precipitous a region is it. We scaled the mountain ranges of Silkee and Bauheet, the top of the latter being nearly 14,000 feet

above the level of the sea, covered with hail and frost, and with blocks of ice in the caves and places sheltered from the sun; then another sudden change, and steep descents of some thousand feet took us down to a hot valley, fertile and beautiful; through the midst, seen from above like a glittering serpent, runs a clear and pleasant stream, its banks clothed in verdure, and abounding with fish. On each side the mountains are dotted with small villages, many of them almost hidden by forests of the banana (called *ensett*), and shady trees abound. This valley, as I beheld it near sunset, with the flocks and lowing herds slowly cropping the green grass along the river as they wended home, and filling the air with their bleatings, was a calm and gemlike picture; but here man destroys regions that nature has adorned with her choicest gifts, and the charm of scenery is soon forgotten in the wrangling, noisy, dirty abodes, where poverty and misrule are only surpassed by vanity and indolence.

Yet I would not have the reader think that the Abyssinians are wholly bad. I shall here only call attention to some points that principally disfigure their character, hoping hereafter to remark on their good qualities. Their principal defects are overweening vanity, entire ignorance of the world beyond Abyssinia, and, lastly, the Jewish characteristic of aversion to the smallest change, whether in modes of thought or habits. So completely have these characteristics taken possession of them, that they are incapable of even imagining an improvement, or of imbibing any single idea beyond what they have inherited. The want of one powerful hand, the pre-eminence of military pursuits, and the rapacious and bigoted priesthood—who, for their own purposes, studiously keep the nation in a thick night of ignorance—confirm and strengthen these defects of character. On the whole, I think that, while the Abyssinians are thus

incapable, yet, once vanquish their idea that they are perfect, that they are the favoured people of the earth, and that nothing can be taught them, and they will be quick and intelligent to learn and to imitate.

We slept in this valley, and went supperless to bed, in spite of Oobeay's strict orders. For this I might have had them punished, but pitying their ignorance, and moreover being accustomed to such fasts by long practice, I left the next morning; and mounting the hills on the opposite side reached the province of Waggera, and the pretty village of Furrus Wago, close to the large market and custom-house of Dubaruk, at which point I again entered the road taken by Bruce. Here I learnt that my caravan of followers had not yet arrived.

Waggera is a large table-land, abounding in grass; during some months the climate is extremely cold. Barley is its principal grain; it has an elevation of about 9,000 feet. It borders nearly on Gondar, and is governed by Oobeay. The next morning my people met me at Dubaruk, having mounted the steep pass of Lemalmon (described by Bruce), one of the steepest mountains in Abyssinia. Here I visited the chief of the customs, Hilo Maria, and dined and slept at his house, my followers remaining at Dubaruk.

The Ras, in his recent campaign against Oobeay, having been encamped at Waggera, this province was almost ruined, whole villages being deserted. The next day being the Saturday before Lent, Hilo Maria had pressed me to remain, and share in the festivities of that occasion. Now at this time Dejaj Kasai, having rebelled against the Ras, had possession of Gondar and the frontier of Waggera. I had secret intelligence that Hilo Maria, who was a sworn enemy of Ras Ali, had informed Kasai of my intended journey, and that an ambush of horse was ready to cut me off on my way to Derrita, the

main road to Devra Tabor. I therefore, that no further plot might be laid, feigned to accept the invitation of Hilo Maria, and promised to remain another day or two. At daylight, however, in the morning, I started all my suite, and sent my secretary to Hilo Maria, apologising for my sudden departure on the score of duty.

Leaving the main road, and keeping a good look-out, I skirted the hills to the left, and in about three hours descended into a low valley, to a village called Murubba, where the troops of Kasai could not follow. I there gave a letter to some priests who were going to Jerusalem, sent by the Ras on the disputed affairs of some land claimed by the Abyssinian Church.

The next day (Sunday) I crossed the brook that in this direction divides the territories of the Ras and Oobeay, and entered the sultry and arid province of Kimfaz. Here Oobeay's people left me, with sundry presents for themselves; and a villager of wealth received me with much hospitality, and gave me a guide. The next day the march was painful to man and beast, over stones angular and piercing, in a burning sun, with no grass or verdure. I slept at a village, had much difficulty with the inhabitants, was several times in danger of a fight, and had no supper.

The next morning I visited the *shoom* (or governor) of Kimfaz, who appeared a great fool, and rather frightened. He promised to send me everything needful for our supper, so I pitched my tent in the only meadow in the province, under a large sycamore, where my mules, nearly dropping with hunger and fatigue, were solaced with green grass. In this sycamore we found bees, and occupied ourselves some hours in trying to pierce it, to get at the honey, which must have been a treasure amassed for years; but the tree resisted us. The governor did not keep his promise, and again we had little or no supper.

The third day, crossing the boundary of Kimfaz, we entered Beggala, a small district; a cry was soon raised that a caravan was passing (as duty is levied here), and we saw soldiers running down to us on all sides, shouting to us to stop, in the name of Ras Ali. They insolently ordered us to throw down our goods, and my servants being disposed to quarrel, I drove them aside, and told the men that we were so-and-so, and not merchants; this they refused to believe, and so I placed all the porters' loads on the ground, and said, 'If you wish to carry these things to Devra Tabor yourselves, I have no objection,' and then went on. Soon they came running after me, to beg me to take on my things, which I would not, however, do until after much entreaty.

It appeared also that my guide had some blood-feud here (the districts of Kimfaz and Beggala fighting continually, without reference to any master), and he would probably have been killed, but for my presence. I had some difficulty in preventing blows, all being aroused; but arrived without any other accident at Bellasa, another hot and arid province. Here we were well received at a large village, and the afternoon was passed in hearing a pleading, whereby it appeared that my servant, on some trifling question, had struck a villager, and that blows had been exchanged on both sides. Considering my servant in the wrong, I was about to punish him, when the villagers in concert begged him off, and said that, being content with my justice, he should only beg pardon of the wounded man.

The next day, still in Bellasa, we slept in a village governed by a man named Hailee the Devil, from his quarrelsome and fearless disposition. With my usual good fortune in Abyssinia, I made him my friend, which he has shown in various ways to this day.

I now met a man, sent by the Ras, to receive and guide

me to Devra Tabor; and leaving Hailee the Devil, we once more emerged from the hot valleys, passing through the small and exceedingly woody province of Dahitch, climbed a steep hill, and reached the large town of Aboonnat, one of the principal markets of Abyssinia. From here to Devra Tabor the country is cool and smiling. We were now in the central province of Begemder; we passed the River Rïb, which empties itself into the Lake Tsana, and then, outstripping my suite, I went straight to the Ras's residence at Devra Tabor. Mr. Bell met me there, having just arrived from his village and province of Diddim, which had been given to him by the Ras.

CHAPTER XX.

MISSION TO RAS ALI—*continued.*

CAMP OF RAS ALI—MY RECEPTION—HIS CHARACTER—BEGGARS AND BEGGING CUSTOMS—VISIT BELL—THE RAS RESOLVES ON A CAMPAIGN INTO GOJAM—PREPARATIONS TO ACCOMPANY HIM—CROSSING THE NILE—BANKS OF THE AVA—RAINY SEASON COMMENCES—MISERIES OF THE CAMP—THE RAS TAKES UP HIS WINTER-QUARTERS—I RETIRE TO YAWISH—VISITS—REJOIN THE RAS.

DEVRA TABOR is the capital chosen by the Ras Gooksa, the first of the present or Galla dynasty, and the grandfather of Ras Ali; it is cold and healthy, but there is no stone house in it but that of the Ras—in fact, it is more of a camp than a town.

The scene, though familiar enough to me, would be curious to a stranger. Outside the door of the Ras's house were sitting men of all grades—some of the highest rank in the country—amidst filth of every description, on large stones or on the ground, and with no shade from the sun; perhaps they had been living so for weeks, in hopes of passing the grim porters into the first court. This, though it by no means involves a sight of the King, is still a coveted privilege; and the porters strike with their long sticks, without respect of persons, whoever attempts to enter without license—nay, they sometimes rush out and ply the crowd without apparent reason, but really to pay off a grudge to some one they see there, who has not given them a douceur. As they get no pay, these douceurs are their chief source of livelihood.

I met here several old acquaintances, whom, though

sorely loth, I was obliged to salute on the cheek, and then passed through the door into the inner court. Here were seated some more favoured individuals, and those servants whom the Ras might require to send on messages from time to time, with various cook-maids and lower servants whom I also knew, for there is in some points an equality in Abyssinia amongst all classes. This is one of their great peculiarities, for, being full of contradictions, this quality is united with the basest servility.

On a wall was perched the Affa Negoose, or king's mouth, with two or three 'elders,' hearing the causes of a crowd of people, who were struggling and shouting for audience below, and from time to time reporting anything of importance to the Ras.

Bell and myself, after a pause of two or three minutes, were introduced. I found the chief sitting, as of old, on a cow-hide thrown carelessly on the ground, with workmen and horses about him, and some Galla boys playing; one servant, standing, awaited orders. He was much pleased to see me, and immediately besieged me with questions as to what I had brought for him, in his usual childish manner. I answered that he would see in due time, but that at present I required a house, and so on. He told me to come into his own house, but this I refused; so, after eating some breakfast with him, I was ordered into the house of a Mussulman chief, about two hundred yards off. As this was on a hill, quite lonely, and with a good fence round it, I was well pleased. The Ras pestered me with messages all day, to show him at least a gun or something, which I steadfastly refused to do. The next morning I paid my porters and sent them back, and at noon took my train of presents to the Ras, with the letter of Her Majesty.

The Ras is a very singular character; and a very difficult one to deal with. He came to power at the early

age of twelve years; he is singularly tenacious of his opinion, very conceited, despising all men, and very hard to be roused into any emotion. Naturally selfish and hard-hearted, you cannot work on him through his ambition, for he has none; nor through his pride, being indifferent even to reputation; nor through his affection, for he has none to spare from himself. There is but one way left, derogatory to European ideas, and adopted only by those Abyssinians who wish to curry favour—namely, to humour his whims, wait upon his fancies, and dance attendance at his door. He is, though callous, alive to the importance of sometimes pretending a sympathy that he does not feel, for, though not wise, he is cunning to the last degree; he laughs at any misfortune that happens to himself, and will hear, with great indifference, of the loss of a battle or a province, or of the death of a favourite chief; he cannot be excited to anger, and is extremely patient; he is never cruel, but more on system than from real compassion; he is just, save when his particular wishes are concerned; he likes intrigue, and organises espionage; he dislikes to punish, and consequently there is much disorder and license in his territories; he is not revengeful, but rather contemptuous of his enemies. He thinks himself a great observer of men's characters, but is often deceived; he is more liked by those who know little of him, than by those who can closely observe him; he hides his character under a mask of *bonhommie*; and, though difficult of access, when he does receive anyone, he places his visitor immediately at his ease. In conversation he appears frank and pleasant, but does not like to speak on business face to face, adopting the system of a messenger or go-between. In person he is of middle height, powerful, active, and of a striking countenance, though somewhat sensual about the mouth; he is versed in all manly exercises—shooting, riding, throwing the lance, running—

and is perhaps one of the best horsemen in Abyssinia, with no lack of personal courage, and spends much of his time in the chase. He is careless of dress or personal ornament of any kind, but cleanly in his habits; of a hardy constitution, he is indifferent as to his personal comfort, and moderate in his meals.

The best points in his character are, that once friendly he does not quickly change, and that he is generous towards his enemies when in his power. The worst traits, in European estimation, are his love of dependency and subservience, an aversion to any serious business, and a supercilious indifference to anything that does not immediately concern himself—consequently, to anything regarding Europe.

I read to him Her Majesty's letter, standing, which he could not understand the object of, and I then gave him the presents that had been sent for him; he was so dazzled, that the effort to preserve his composure failed, and he plainly showed his delight. The Affa Negoose, who now came in, was much astonished at my lavishness in giving all this at once, which he said should have been done by degrees. I explained that this was not important to our Sovereign, and that I did my duty in giving it as it was sent. I then took my leave.

It is needless to recall all the childish messages with which I was bored every five minutes; the chief matter is that I found it, at that time, a hopeless task to persuade him that I neither expected nor would take any recompense for myself. He said, 'Then it is a shame for me to take these things, as I am too poor to offer any compensation to your Queen, and you refuse any token of my regard.' He then offered me two villages, saying, 'Where will you put your horse and your mule? Where will you get grass, or a house, if you have not these?' As this was true, and I did not wish either to alarm his jealousy at

first by too much pride, or to risk the friendship I had laboured to obtain, I accepted them; and I may as well say at once, that after some time, when in many conversations, and by much reasoning, I had made him to understand more clearly the object of my mission, I returned him those villages, of which I had made no profit. On the strength of our personal friendship I had, however, to present him with pistols, guns, rifles, &c., my private property, amounting to a considerable sum.

As soon as my tent was pitched, and the news of my arrival spread, with reports of my amazing wealth, at the least 300 beggars, of both sexes, camped round my enclosure. These, with their cries, gave me no repose day and night for three days, and were only kept by main force from entering within my fence. As, however, I knew from experience that if I relieved these, every beggar in Abyssinia, even from the most distant parts, would speedily besiege me, I held out, and, my patience exceeding theirs, they at last left me, with no small share of abuse. The result was that, during my residence in the Ras's camp, scarcely a single beggar came to my door, but I quietly relieved many whom I saw really in distress.

As begging is a science in Abyssinia, I shall here give some description of it. First, the beggars by profession, who, without necessity or disease, prefer to live in this way, are pretty numerous, and convince you each day that at least their lungs are sound. Here I may observe that it is the Abyssinian doctrine to give, according to your means, to all that come, without distinction. The diseased who can walk make their regular rounds with a wallet; those who cannot walk, either take up their station on some frequented spot, or throng in the church porches. These all invoke you in the name of the saint of the day; and as nearly every day in Abyssinia is appropriated by some worthy celestial, you are invoked in the name of

Sunday and of Saturday, of St. Michael and St. George, and of many others peculiarly venerated in Abyssinia.

Next, a class of people called *Hamina*, or *Dekama*; the meaning of the first word I do not know, but the second name signifies 'feeble.' These, like the gipsies, inherit their right to beg, as being descendants of lepers; many of them are indeed loathsome objects, and ride about the country on donkeys, given to them by the charitable, but many, again, are stalwart young men or women. These people come about midnight to the door, and sing a curious and monotonous song till cockcrow. This song is intended to put you in mind of your mortality, and its burden is, 'Oh, this world!' Some wealthy Abyssinians, of a serious turn, wish for this entertainment every night. If this was all, it would not be bad; but if you give them nothing, the abuse you receive is not so instructive as the song, and they get more through this fear than from charity.

Moreover, at every funeral or marriage-feast, they force their way in numbers, and not unfrequently give blows, which no one can return for fear of the disgrace. They sometimes even openly plunder in the market, trusting to the same impunity, and generally their insolence is beyond belief.

I remember a friend of mine, of the highest rank, who made the usual funeral feast for his mother, with many cows and sheep, and beer and mead in proportion; these Dekamas poured into the shed, and to pacify them he gave them two cows, and two immense jars of beer, but not satisfied, they abused him, and one even raised his stick to strike him. On this a hot-headed follower dealt the beggar a blow that felled him. There was a general confusion; the Dekamas said the man that had received the blow would die, and forced the chief to find security for blood—that is, that he himself should be put to death,

or at least arraigned for murder, if the result should be fatal. So, after the manner of Abyssinia, the chief and many others entreating pardon of these wretched lepers, and much to-do, the blow having been very slight, they at last consented to receive about a double proportion of food, &c., and so the affair ended after some hours of such pleasant discussion. I made a point myself of never giving them anything.

Next come the public minstrels, called *Asmarees*; these play on a one-stringed fiddle, and sing airs of all kinds, gay or warlike, free or mournful. Great men are afraid to exclude them, and they mostly attach themselves to some one chief or other, at the same time laying under tribute all others they choose; these men gain a great deal. Their great art consists, not only in a knowledge of all the vocal music extant in the country, but especially in inventing some smart couplet on any new event of love, war, &c. This I cannot convey in our language, as in one song there may be three or four *doubles-entendres*, and also allusions to particular events; so that, unless a man be perfectly acquainted with the language, and also with the passing events of the day, all explanation would be intolerably long and tedious.

In mourning for a chief of reputation, allusions are made to his private history in each line. There is often much subtle wit in these conceits, and by practice they are very quick at inventing, and their hearers at understanding. The more far-fetched and difficult to understand is the idea, the louder, generally, is the applause. As in these verses, which spread over the country like wildfire, they commend their friends and bitterly abuse their enemies, few men of any rank care to offend them, but, trusting in my reputation, I never would receive them. They are considered as women, and the fiddle is as good a protection as a woman's gown; in battle

no one will touch them; it is also a term of reproach to be called *Asmaree*, a light, talkative, vainglorious fellow. 'You want no trumpeter to sound your praises,' is as common a phrase in Abyssinia as with us.

There are also female public singers, called *Mungerash*; these attach themselves generally to some chief. They extol, in a kind of rapid chant, the deeds of warriors, and excite the men to valour even on the field of battle. These women also gain much; and in some provinces, as Worroheimano, Aijjo, &c., they are exceedingly prized, their praise or blame making or marring the reputation. In their lives they are dissolute courtesans, and, like the Asmarees, lay everyone under contribution.

These are the regular beggars, but there are more disguised ways of robbing you. One custom is, that when a servant breaks a bottle, or loses a knife, &c., he goes round to all his master's acquaintance, and begs from each to replace it, so that he may make a decent profit. Next is the custom of *miseraj*. When a man gains a battle, or his wife bears a son, or he kills a lion, elephant, or other large beast, he sends a servant to each of his acquaintance, with the *miseraj*, or good news, on which the servant obtains a mule or a horse, or at least a cloth. A curious phase of this custom, which could hardly exist in any other country, is that the *miseraj* of gaining a battle is sent, by the conqueror, even to the chief whose troops have been beaten (in his absence), and, moreover, the latter bestows rewards on the messengers who bring the unwelcome tidings.

Again, the most annoying of all kinds of begging, to a stranger, is that of *berakut*, or presents. If a man has means, all his poor neighbours are perpetually persecuting him with presents—as a jar of beer, a pair of trousers, and the like: for this, at some time or other, he must pay a dollar or two. The only chance of escape is, to

exclude everyone that you suspect of such intentions from your door, as, if once admitted, they have such excellent reasons for giving, and flatter and lie with so good a grace—swearing that they act from pure love, and never expect any return, and stand before you with such deep humility—that there is no alternative but to accept the proffered gift. Among equals it is the custom to beg for anything that they may fancy: one sends to you for your horse, another for your gun, another for your mule, &c., vowing eternal friendship, and any return you please to ask, excepting, generally, the thing you want. A chief of the highest rank will ask, without shame, for the merest trifle, and send messenger after messenger to demand it. Nor would I have it thought that this is only towards strangers; these are customs in universal use, from the king to the beggar, amongst themselves; so that, as the priests beg in the same manner as the laity, it may be said that Abyssinia is a nation of beggars in various disguises. The principal merchants are the most free from this habit.

As I did not wish to press the Ras on the matter of the Treaty, I went for a week to Bell's house, about four or five hours' journey from Devra Tabor. This is situated on a very high hill, part of a mountain-range, whose cold, fogs, barley, and fir-trees reminded me of Scotland. The sides of the mountains are thickly clothed with wood, but bare towards the tops of all but grass.

I next visited Lamza, on the borders of the lake, to eat fish, and recruit my cattle with grass; and then, hearing that the Ras was about to start on an expedition against Bourroo Goscho in Gojam, returned to Kimtona, near Devra Tabor.

The Ras sent to me at least two or three times a day for more guns, pistols, and everything else he thought I might have; and I may as well add that, in the end, he

stripped me, by degrees, of all my remaining private property, including all my own guns and pistols, some of value, and my tent. I frequently went to him on the subject of the Treaty; he always appointed another day, and at last definitively said he would sign it at the hot springs of Goramba (described elsewhere *), where he was to spend a week before his expedition.

The Ras left a very able old woman, his relative, to be his representative in Begemder till his return; but she died suddenly of apoplexy the same day, when the appointment was conferred on her nephew. The Ras took this excuse of pretended sorrow to enjoy his ease in his bath, and would see no one; so, after various attempts, we saw we must follow him to Gojam, and I took leave, to make our preparations for this campaign. These arrangements are arduous enough, as you must carry with you a month's provision of everything, unless you wish to starve—viz., a large quantity of flour, butter, honey, and sheep, with jars to make mead in; tents, a grindstone, hatchets, grass-knives, cooking utensils, and hides for your beds; bags in which to stow things, mules and donkeys sufficient to carry them, maidservants to grind corn and prepare your food, men to load and drive the beasts, and fighting-men to guard all; besides these, your *kullubaigin*, or outdoor servants.

So we set this tremendous apparatus in motion, and heard that the Ras had already crossed the bridge. We made the more haste, as we knew that the rear of his army stood a good chance of being cut off by the troops of Bourroo Goscho, who would conceal themselves in jungles till the main body had passed, and then sally out on stragglers. In a pleasant camp near Manta Dever we were joined by several chiefs, hurrying to overtake the Ras by forced marches.

* See Chapter VIII.

The second day, at Tokoor Waha (or 'black water'), the trees, shade, and grass were most luxuriant, and fish was abundant. Bell, going hunting in the evening, killed a hippopotamus at the Nile, but did not find any buffaloes. Here are vast forests bordering on the great river, where wild beasts roam at leisure in a perpetual shade, with here and there meadows, clear and sunny; and beyond these the Nile spreads out into a wide and shining river. At this place I was taken with a return of my ancient enemy, the fever, and could hardly sit my mule the next day.

On arriving at the bridge, some few miles from our camp, we found that the Ras had preceded us the day before, and that the crush had been fearful; when we crossed, one woman miraculously escaped, being precipitated full forty feet, into the foaming river below, without being injured. This bridge was built by the Portuguese; it is about fifteen feet in width, and the parapets are broken away; moreover, the mud on it was a foot or more deep.

We struggled and scrambled across, no order whatever being preserved in an Abyssinian march; but beasts, men, women, and children, shouting and joking and pressing on indifferently, make a pretty confusion. I think we were nearly half an hour in getting clear of this, though we were only the stragglers of the army, and we soon after reached the Ras's camp near Agitta.

The people of this and all the towns had been in mortal fear lest the Ras should order a general massacre and plundering, as he had done once before; but his mind was now more humane, and he forbad all excesses.

Our route was over a plain separated from Gojam by the valley of the River Ava, which in the rainy season pours down a large flood into the Nile, now on our left hand as we marched. The road down is precipitous,

and the day was hot and dusty. I was obliged to descend on foot, though burning with fever, and force my way through the crowds of men and beasts, shouting and treading on each other, without any order. Women and children, by some wonderful conformation, thread this motley throng, although many accidents happen from falling stones, spears badly held, &c. I reached the bottom of the hill, when four *agazins* started up within a few paces of me; I dared not fire for fear of hitting stragglers, and they soon disappeared. We camped on the hither bank of the Ava, and I reached my tent at last, after having lain for an hour or so under a tree on the line of march, completely exhausted, and worn-out with fever and thirst. The Ras had gone by another road with a small party, as was generally his custom. The same day, for fear of the crush on the banks of the river and at the ford, he took the precaution of sending on some of his generals, with their troops, by a forced march.

There must have been at least 80,000 souls on the road, besides troops sent to Damot, left in Begemder, &c., and the proportion of animals and baggage was immense. Bell and myself, with our followers, were about a hundred in number, and I think we had at least fifty head of beasts. Besides these, all the men of any wealth had numbers of cattle and sheep, for slaughter, driven along, so that the confusion in a difficult pass can hardly be described, everybody pushing along as they best can. From a certain easiness of temper and disposition, however, few quarrels occur.

The immediate descent to the Ava is a small declivity of only 300 feet, but very steep, stony, and slippery, and the road is overhung with small trees and jungle; here our path was over dead donkeys, that had fallen, and been abandoned at every step. The struggle, occupying more than an hour, was disagreeable for one as sick as I then was,

and on foot; the water in the river was little more than two feet in depth, but running strong, so that boys and women were obliged to be assisted across. Ascending the steep hill on the other side for about three hours, partly on foot and partly on a mule, with the loss of one or two baggage-animals, we issued with the human torrent on the wide plains near Mota, where the sight of the Ras's tent much rejoiced me; and the prospect of grass, no less than of having room to move, was most agreeable. The cool air also refreshed me, and from that day I began to improve in health. It is needless to recount the deer, antelopes, pigs, &c., that we killed daily.

The Ras, after some council, pushed on for Nephsee, a mountainous and bitterly cold province, devoted to Bourroo Goscho, and where his troops were said to be in force. The rainy season now began, and the discomforts of the march increased tenfold. On arriving at Nephsee our provisions were finished, a small tin of about half-a-pint of raw grain being served out to our servants for a day, and ourselves faring not much better. The troops of Bourroo hung like a cloud on the still higher mountains above our camp, almost inaccessible, and with a retreat open behind them to the still more impenetrable valleys and jungle of the Nile. Rain was incessant, deep mud, bitter cold, and often hail, the beasts dying in multitudes (we ourselves lost nine); and the camp, from the stench, cold, and bad food, was attacked with dysentery and typhus, fatal to many. I obtained from the town, or church, of Mirtwala Marian a small supply of grain for a dollar or two, that kept life in us. To apply to the Ras was useless, as he was little better off, the inhabitants having fled in every direction, burying their corn, or carrying it to the Nile.

A plunder was ordered in the valley of that river, in the direction of Sooma, the strong mountain where Bourroo

Goscho had posted himself; and the next morning, almost every man poured out of the camp at daylight, and hurried in search of hidden corn or cows, or whatever they might find. Bourroo Goscho had so well taken his measures, however, that they returned home the next day empty-handed and worn-out, many being also cut off by the people of the valley. My servants had gone in another direction, and found a hole filled with buried honey, and, after some danger, arrived in camp with five mules laden, but no corn.

Next day, the Ras gave the order to march southerly, to the universal joy, in order to take up his winter-quarters, near the centre of Gojam. From Nephsee to this we made three forced marches; the rivers, so numerous in Gojam, were fast filling, but we forced our way through mud, water, and rain, wading or swimming, every man taking care of himself—some being drowned, others crushed; but our party, by sheer good fortune, arrived safely at Daveet, where the winter-camp was to be, after a march of, I think, thirty miles the last day; many did not arrive till the next evening, but there was now some prospect of obtaining food. This, however, depended solely on the Ras, there being now no markets, and nothing to be bought, so the whole army was now to be billeted upon Gojam and Damot. To the chiefs such-and-such provinces were given, to maintain them and their followers; to the small gentry two or three villages; and to the bands of soldiers the usual allowance of a bushel of corn each for a month, ordered upon such provinces and towns as the Ras retained for that purpose; the same also was reserved for his own household.

Bell represented to the Ras that I was sick and wanted repose, that we had not an ounce of bread (in fact, I had been buying and killing cows for my servants), and that we could buy none. The Ras then ordered us some corn in

a village near, which we never got, and for me some cow's milk every day. After further remonstrances, Bell obtained three villages, for our joint maintenance. These, when we arrived at them, were found to be deserted of inhabitants; so I left them entirely to Bell, telling the Ras so, and retired for the rainy season to Yawish, a town where I was well known and liked.

One of these villages consisted of a ruined church and one house; this was on the Plain of Gojam—the other two were down in the Valley of Koombat. We went to look at the nearest of the latter. All this Valley of the Nile is divided into many provinces, of which Koombat is, perhaps, the most wild and romantic. The inhabitants are brave and hospitable, alive to insult, firm friends, but ruthless foes. From the highland or plateau of Gojam, precipitous cliffs hedge it in all round, with only a difficult track here and there; over these thunder the rivers in the floods, sending their spray higher than the cliffs above, and generally wrapt in fog. After descending the first declivity, there is a succession of plateaux, well cultivated and woody, with intervening cliffs, several hundred feet in height; and then over rough and broken ground—sometimes precipitous, sometimes a slope, sometimes stretching into a wide plain for miles—you reach the last descent to the Nile, which rolls 800 or 1000 feet below, almost hidden from the eye, the precipices being clothed with thick jungle.

On the third of the plateaux above described was situated the village we visited, at a sufficient distance from the cliff to avoid the danger of slips. There were a dozen houses, but we found them utterly deserted. After reiterated calling, an old man appeared, and ventured to approach us; with him Bell had some conference, and he agreed to persuade the villagers to return. We slept, however, supperless and tired, having come on foot, our mules being sent by a circuitous road. All night

we were kept awake by the thunder of the cascades near us, and the continual fall of huge rocks, loosened from the cliffs, like ceaseless artillery; leopards being numerous here, their harsh voices (between roar and grunt) added to the concert; heavy rain also fell unceasingly. Large rivers, running through such deep ravines and vast valleys, are a feature almost peculiar to Abyssinia.

I passed the three rainy months in Yawish, without any event worthy of notice, except an excursion to the Wobas, or in Koombat in search of sport, described elsewhere.* Yawish is a pretty town, seated on a small eminence, sloping gradually away on all sides into green meadows and cornfields, with a small river winding close to it. There may be about 3,000 inhabitants, and, like most people in Gojam, they are civil and agreeable to strangers. The market is at Basso, one of the largest and best-frequented in Abyssinia, about eight miles distant; and in the large Mahomedan town of Ayjubay, close by, may be found all the products of Massowah, and what are considered luxuries in Abyssinia.

The Ras sent me several polite messages, asking me why I did not come near him; but I knew too well the misery and discomfort of his camp to accede, and therefore only visited him twice—the first time accompanied by Bell. We mounted our horses, and went alone to Daveet; the distance may be fifteen miles or more, and we had to cross six rivers swollen into torrents. Numbers of lives are yearly lost in these waters, but we returned in safety at three o'clock in the afternoon, wet through from head to foot, having swam some, and forded others.

At the Muskul, I again visited the Ras, and found him removed to Bichana, opposite the mountain of Bourroo Goscho, whose house could be seen by the naked eye, and his drums heard, which he ostentatiously beat.

* See Chapter XXII.

It appeared that whilst the Ras was at Daveet, he had sent his guards to encamp about ten miles off, but between them and the Ras were two rivers. Trusting to these barriers, Bourroo Goscho sallied from his mountain fastness, attacked these troops, and defeated them with great slaughter, many being drowned in attempting to swim the river in their rear, under a heavy fire. He then returned to his stronghold, and it was after this exploit that the Ras had determined on camping at Bichana.

Here he had, on my arrival, some pressing affairs, and also some domestic news that distressed him, so that I could not see him. It was the death of his sister, married to the Wagshoom, that afflicted him. I went, therefore, to condole with the Wagshoom, as my friend. I found him seated in his tent, apparently quite at his ease, with numerous persons sitting on the ground, who had come for the same purpose as myself. On our first entering we said, as is usual, 'May God give you strength!' and then the conversation took a general turn, the more formal cry having been finished the day before; and as he liked me much, I gradually made him cheerful. Presently most people took their leave, but he kept me, in spite of protestations; a fat cow or two were killed, and the evening was spent in some jollity; he then pitched a tent for me, where I slept that night. In the morning I left, and shortly came upon another camp. Finding it was that of Birro Aligaz, I walked in to pay my respects, found him at an early breakfast, and was obliged to go through more eating and drinking, the chief also presenting me with his lance. Starting at 11 o'clock, I got into Yawish the same night, having travelled some sixty miles, through mud up to the knees, and crossing at least fifteen rivers—some of them after dark, and infested with wild beasts.

From Yawish I went to meet Dejaj Goscho, my old

acquaintance, and the best friend of strangers—the most gentlemanly, generous, and gallant man in Abyssinia. The Ras was very jealous of my friendship with him. I met him, and passed a night with him very agreeably, his conversation being as pleasant as his soul was noble.

As the rains were now ended, and operations might be expected against the numerous rebel forces, still in strength in various parts of the country (even whilst I was at Yawish, a large band of 500 horse came down from the hills and plundered the market of Basso), I invited Bell to Yawish to consult upon our proceedings. In about a week came a report that the Ras was about to return to Begemder; it was at least certain that he had marched from Bichana, but his future movements were unknown. As everyone was hurrying towards his camp, the road being already dangerous, we also started, with all our company.

Through the centre of the plateau, encircled by the Nile, runs a high and cold range of mountains, clothed with vast pine forests. In these recesses, thousands of rebels were lurking, and it was perilous to journey near the foot of this range. We, however, took this road—

The Douglas and the Hotspur confident against a world in arms.

We were warned at several passes, by the peasants and some friends of ours, that an attack was prepared. We did not, however, change our direction, but took good precautions, strongly fencing our camp every night, and marching in good order, with a rearguard in the day, and sending out horsemen on the skirts of the road. The rivers were now moderate, and as we marched near their source, there was little water; the road and scenery were most exquisite, and the verdure so tempted us, that we were no less than twelve days on the road, finding the Ras encamped at Ermowga, not more than seventy

miles from Yawish. My dogs killed a porcupine on the road, and we enjoyed also the flesh of wild hogs and antelopes.

We found the Ras's brother camped some two miles distant from the main camp, and pitched our tents beside him, finding excellent grass and firewood there. We were nearest to the descent into the Valley of the Nile, and it was known that rebels were concealed in the jungle, but we thought ourselves strong enough to resist any sudden attack. In the evening we went to pay our respects to the Ras, and were very well received; shortly after he sent me a mule, having heard that a beautiful one of mine had died at Yawish.

One evening, I heard behind my tent a great noise of horses, and many mingled war-cries. Thinking it was an attack, I sprang up; but looking out saw my own servants, some six of them, well mounted, on horses that I certainly had never given them. The story was this: these six (two being gunners of mine, the other four leading dogs) had gone out shooting on the hills behind our camp; there, following game, they came suddenly on a large camp of rebels, who had been employed in the night in conveying supplies to the mountain, and were reposing in a thick jungle, their horses feeding. Taking advantage of this, the gunners commenced their shouts and war-cries; and the dogs being let loose, the rebels believed that the Ras in person was there (as he was fond of the chase), and, though well-armed and numerous, they precipitately fled. My men lost no time, but leapt upon a horse each (the best they could find), and went away at speed before the panic had ceased. After some days, these horses were all claimed by different people in the camp, being found to have been stolen, or else taken in different fights or skirmishes; and the law of Abyssinia being founded, generally, on some idea contrary to the notions

of all the rest of the world, my servants had to restore them, without recompense, or even thanks, for having taken them at the risk of their lives, and having since fed and looked after them.

The next day there was an alarm that Bourroo was sallying from his mountain stronghold to attack the camp. We saw all the beasts that had been out to pasture, pouring hurriedly into the camp, and Dejaj Ingeda preparing his men for battle, so we also quickly saddled our horses, loaded our arms, and girded up our loins; having done so, we sat quietly in our camp till we should know the truth, and from whence danger was to be apprehended. Bell had been with the Ras, sent by me on messages to that potentate regarding the Treaty, and he came presently, and informed me of the true cause of the panic. It appeared that Dejaj Imam's wife, coming from Begemder, had been surrounded by rebels, and placed in some danger. Imam, a fiery man, instantly ordered boot and saddle, and sent to the Ras to say that he was off; the Ras laughed, and said, in his cynical manner, 'Either your wife is by this time in Bourroo's mountain, and you will not get her, or she is in safety and will come by herself.' Imam, however, being already out of hearing, the Ras ordered some troops to his support in case of danger, and when these were saddled, the report arose of an attack on the camp.

CHAPTER XXI.

MISSION TO RAS ALI—*concluded.*

THE RAS SIGNS THE TREATY—THE CAMP STARVING—PLUNDERING—THE RAS'S ANGER—COMPLAINT AGAINST ME—A TIFF WITH THE RAS—TAKE LEAVE OF HIM, AND JOIN MY APPOINTED ESCORT, AMORO HAILO—START FOR MAYCHA BY DAMOT—HARDSHIPS OF THE JOURNEY—ARRIVAL IN BEGEMDER.

Soon after this, the Ras told me that he would sign the Treaty, and that I might prepare to start with the Wagshoom, who was returning to his country of Sokota, to fight with his cousin, who had broken out of prison and made himself master of the province. Accordingly, one morning, I went into his inner tent, and had the Treaty read to him by my scribe. After the Abyssinian manner, he kept talking to his favourite *shoomeree* about a horse that was tied in the tent, and that was nearly treading me under foot half a dozen times (we all sat on the ground, the Ras inclusive). On his asking me some trifling question, in answer, I begged his attention to what was being read, to which he assented, and yawned exceedingly; however, it was got through, some points having been explained and dwelt upon by me. Whereupon, the Ras said that he saw no harm whatever in the document; on the contrary, that it was excellent, but appeared to him exceedingly useless, inasmuch as he did not suppose, as Abyssinia was then constituted, that one English merchant would or could enter it in ten years. He then sealed the two copies, and gave his own to a favourite *deftara*, with orders to take it to Devra Tabor, and lock it up there. Now it is probably destroyed,

the Ras's house having been plundered and burnt by Dejaj Kasai* in 1853. He then yawned again, and when I told him that I was ready to start with the Wagshoom, whose troops were already moving past, he told me that he had changed his mind, and that I must wait a few days. (I think he did this for fear I should be entangled in the Wagshoom's wars). That chief then came and took leave, receiving a handsome horse, and the Ras took his shield from him—the same that I afterwards sent to Her Majesty. I retired to my tent, as there was no remedy but patience.

I had informed the Ras that we were in danger of starving, and begged either that he would send me away immediately, so that I might find markets to supply myself, or give me what was necessary for food. In the careless manner of the country, he of course said 'Very well,' but nothing was done. My servants, having been without any food for two days, went out at night and cut some corn, as indeed most of the camp were doing, more or less, from sheer necessity. The owner of the field followed them, and then cried all night to the Ras, who sent me next morning a message to do him justice. I replied that I was sorry for what had happened, but that my servants were actually starving; as I had no means to help them, and he himself, in spite of my representations, would not, I could not punish them, the case being one of necessity; but that I would repair, to the best of my power, the injury done to the countryman, as I should have done had he come direct to me. At this moment, the camp was all moving to new ground, from some private whim of the Ras; so I told the countryman to take up what he could collect of the corn, threshed and unthreshed, and then to follow me to the next station, when I would give him ample recompense for his loss. We had but a few miles

* The present King Theodore.

to go, and such was the hunger of the camp, that the soldiers broke all discipline, and openly threshed whole fields of corn, on the roadside, in spite of the Ras's orders. The troops of Dejaj Oobeay were conspicuous. The Ras became more furious at this than I ever saw him. He seized some with his own hand, and then sent all his guards (some 3,000), with orders to disperse and seize everyone that they saw with corn in his hand, without respect of persons. There was a terrible confusion, and the Ras having heard that Oobeay's troops were already encamped, and would probably fight, he moved his own tent three times, so that everybody was obliged to shift again, and many were thus seized. He then ordered all taken to be flogged with the ox-whip (many were old men, and of rank); and this flogging lasted till dark, the rest being reserved till morning.

The countryman I before spoke of, who was coming to me to receive his compensation, on hearing the crack of the whip, thought this a good time, during the Ras's wrath, to punish my men; and he vociferously renewed his complaint, making the Ras believe that I had refused to hear him, so that he sent a servant with the man, asking why I had left him to complain again, when the countryman began to dance, and cry out, 'You will all be flogged!' As I was now getting a little excited, I told him that, if he did not hold his tongue, he might chance to be flogged first, and that by me. I then sent Bell to the Ras, to say that I had promised to pay the man for his loss, and wondered how the Ras could be so silly as to listen to every idle tale. Bell brought me back a somewhat equivocal message, to the import of sending my servants to be punished. To this I sent back word by the Ras's servant, to say that he might come and take me with them, if he pleased, for I certainly would not send them; moreover that, had they deserved it, I should have punished them myself, and

that no one else, not even he, had any power over them; further, that he deserved himself to be punished, and not the poor starved devils he was flogging. As to the countryman, I sent him with the mule that the Ras had presented to me some days before, and told his Highness to pay him with that, being some twenty times the value of what he had lost; and, further, that I wished neither for his mules nor his friendship, as by such insulting manners, so soon after he had signed the Treaty, he had left me nothing to ask him for but a speedy escort to depart.

With this message it appears he was rather startled, and the mule was sent back, with a very polite and soothing speech, to say that I was mistaken, that I must not get angry, and to settle the matter with the peasant as I liked. So I called the man and said, 'Swear what you believe the damage to be!' which he did to the amount of one dollár and a half, being forsworn at least the dollar; and I paid him, saying (what was true) that he would have had five times that sum, and without swearing, had he come to me direct. On my second message with the mule, I heard afterwards, that the countryman had narrowly escaped being flogged himself, for embarrassing the Ras. The flogging went on till nightfall, and the rest next day were pardoned. All this severity, however, could not overcome the pangs of hunger, and fields were ravaged every night, in spite of guards, and afterwards many fell in night-quarrels, which was not the case before. The next morning the Ras ordered me some corn at Deema, which was obtained with much trouble, and after nearly a fight with the people of the town.

The Ras having determined to send Amoro Hailo, a chief of rank, by the route of Damot into Maycha, ordered him to escort me across the Nile. This chief had no baggage, but a force of some 500 men, horse and foot, with a very few matchlocks. Now came the struggle. The

Ras wanted my favourite rifle; I refused. He then sent me a beautiful Sennaar greyhound, after this a fine cream-coloured horse; the latter I refused. He would take no denial, and at last I gave him my rifle, which I would not have parted with for fifty horses—now especially, as I knew that our journey would be full of danger, and I had no gun of my own.

This important point finished, I took leave of my friends and of the Ras, with a letter and sundry presents for Queen Victoria, and followed the route taken by Amoro Hailo, my baggage having preceded me in the morning. Scarcely was I out of the camp when a breathless runner came, saying that the Ras prayed me, as his beloved brother, &c., to send him my tent, this being nearly the only European relic I had left. I told him that his master was a child, and gave a direct refusal. We camped in the evening, and then the runner again caught me up, saying the Ras would send me another tent of his own instead, and that would serve me till I could buy myself a new one, with many protestations of love, &c. I then told the runner to bring me first the other tent, and that then he should have it; so he returned, cursing the Ras, and me, and all others. For the third time he came the next morning before we started, and showed me an old smoky tent that the Ras had sent me. I told him to take them both back, and to tell his master to give his own to his kitchen-maids, as I should be ashamed to put my head in such a thing. To suppose, however, that it is possible to make an Abyssinian ashamed, is to suppose you can make the sun blush. The Ras probably laughed, and said he was very glad to have two tents instead of one, with perhaps some remark on the folly of pride.

To return to our night's rest with Amoro Hailo. When I stated to the Ras that I had not an ounce of provisions for a journey, he said that the country must feed me.

Markets, of course, there were none; the whole route we should pass through was infested with strong bands of rebels, and nothing can be bought except at a market; so I resolved to live according to the unruly times, and profit by my former experience of life in Abyssinia.

It was the season of harvest, and round the place where we camped were many bean-fields in full yield. In the evening the countrypeople, near, brought to Amoro Hailo bread and beer for his followers, but nothing to me, and prayed him to protect their beans; soon after, my followers, having nothing to eat, began to pick the beans, and eat them raw. Amoro Hailo sent to tell me not to allow it. I told him that people could not perish with hunger, that he had heard the Ras's orders, and should be ashamed of himself for not sharing with me that which he had received from the peasants. I heard no more from him, and we all supped on raw beans, which the peasants themselves picked and brought us in bundles, when they saw there was no other remedy.

The next morning we went on, and at a river found the chief of the Ras's guard posted, with orders to turn back everybody but myself, Amoro Hailo, and our followers, and also the Ras's *chaign*, with many loads of ivory for Gondar; a crowd of all ranks, who had started for Begemder under our protection, were thus obliged to return. We slept at Lookwoot, after a short journey, and this night were all billeted on the countrypeople, and supped well on such food as the poor can afford; nor did we want for milk and beer. The houses here are made like vast beehives. There grow in the neighbourhood very strong bamboos, called *kurkala*, forty feet in length; these fixed in the ground, and bent forcibly down till their points meet in a common centre, form the shape mentioned, and being then strongly interlaced with others, and thatched all over, the house is pretty, airy, convenient, and durable.

The next day we were pursuing our route towards the province of Damot, by an almost direct road, near the hilly range I have described, when news was heard by the chief that occasioned a hurried turn to the south. This news was, that a powerful band of 500 or more, under a partisan of Bourroo, were assembled to fall on us at night, for which purpose our proximity to the mountains, in whose caves and forests they dwelt, would have afforded every facility.

We placed many miles betwixt us and them, as we thought, and near nightfall I selected a large and wealthy-looking house for my quarters; this, I afterwards learned, the chief had appropriated for himself, and was the only place near where there was a decent chance of supper; but I knew the country well, and that he could not disturb me after taking possession, so he went on to another village, after warning me that we should in all probability be attacked, and to be on the alert all night.

The owner of the house was glad enough of my choice, as he was thus sure of protection and good treatment from the soldiers, who otherwise are little scrupulous on these occasions, treating the country-people pretty roughly. Moreover, he was an old acquaintance of mine, by name Kasai Goscho, and, though much impoverished by a heavy fine, levied on him by Bourroo Goscho, on a frivolous pretext, was still so well off as to render the exertion of hospitality towards us a trifling matter for him. Accordingly, he gave us a capital supper, where meat and tejj were not wanting, and my followers all fared well.

At 8 o'clock came a messenger from Amoro Hailo, to say that he had certain news, that a large body would attack us at midnight; and as they would, perhaps, be aided by the villagers, he had thought fit to retire into the adjoining jungle near the river, with all his men, and implored me to do the same with all despatch. I told the

messenger, in reply, that I was very comfortable in my quarters, and should probably take care of myself in case of an assault; and as to the villagers, I turned to my host (who was present), and told him that on the first signal of tumult I should set fire to his house, that at least we might not fight in the dark; so that, if he had any communication with the rebels, he had better send them good advice in time, and let us all part friends. Now, I beg it may not be imagined that this was bravado, but I had studied the Abyssinian character well, and knew, from old experience, that they seldom attack persons who are seen to be firm and well-prepared: to this I attribute the fact, that I have never been attacked in Abyssinia, though I have travelled the worst roads at the worst and most unsafe times, with few followers, and though my plunder and death has often been in contemplation, as I have subsequently heard from the individuals themselves.

An Abyssinian will recount such a plot afterwards as a good joke, and expect you to receive it as such, which was illustrated on the present occasion. Two years later I met two servants of Bell, who stated that one of them was the relative of Kasai Goscho's wife, and was at that time in the service of the rebel chief; that on the night in question, they had come down in force to within a mile of the house, purposing to attack us, and that he had been sent forward to reconnoitre our force; that he had eaten his supper, disguised as a monk, in the private apartment of our hostess, and had heard my message to Amoro Hailo, and had, besides, seen the precautions I took—each man having his arms ready, and a strong watch being set all night. He had then returned, and made such a report of our strength and resolution, as induced his chief to abandon the idea; he was, moreover, urged to postpone his attack to some other day, by Kasai Goscho, who did not wish his house to be burned as a prelimi-

nary, and who was fully assured that I should keep my word—I having also added to that gentleman's fear by threatening to shoot him, the first man, by the light of the conflagration. This I did, knowing he was probably connected with the rebels, and would have the means of communicating my message to them. We therefore slept peaceably that night, and took leave of our host with many assurances of friendship and esteem, leaving him a fatigued donkey.

From here we entered the province of Gozam, then governed, in the Ras's name, by one Bellata Fanti. This man appeared, and invited the chief and myself, with a few followers, to spend the night with him ; he answering for the safety of the rest of our troop for that period, who were to push on, with an escort from him, on the road to Damot. As we knew there must be a tacit compact between him and the rebels—who were careful not to enlist against them any powerful natives of the districts near, and would therefore keep faith—we accepted the invitation, on my part after some demur ; as I had no inclination to enter into the scene of dissipation that an Abyssinian feast usually presents, nor to absent myself from my followers, who were likely, moreover, to commit some excesses when unchecked by my presence.

I yielded, however, and, arriving at the house of this wealthy franklin, we found that, though early in the morning, the table was already spread, and groaning under a weight of bread. The signal given, cows fell and were slaughtered on every side, rows of cooking damsels trooped in with savoury smoking dishes, others carrying many jars of strong mead ; our followers flocked in till the room was crammed, the proper officers keeping order with sticks, and pointing out places on the ground (seats only being reserved for us three), and then began the eating and drinking. The mead went round fast, wine

and spirits were not wanting, and there being no possible means of reaching the door, unless I walked on the heads of those that were masticating and drinking without a pause, I resigned myself to inevitable destiny, imbibing as little as the somewhat pressing hospitality of my two friends would permit. I believe I sat there for eight mortal hours, that is till sunset, and then left the lower classes still engaged with the fragments, and some huge earthen jars of *boosa*.

We had a private *cena* in the evening, for the 'whole duty of man,' in Abyssinia, is literally eating and drinking; and then I was well contented to retire to rest, more fatigued than I should have been with the hardest bodily exercise, and half deaf. The greater part of the company were, happily, drunk and insensible—(indeed, this is their great aim); but, as I found a room to myself and a good couch, I cared not.

At daylight we were up as usual, for no carouse ever keeps an Abyssinian in bed after that hour, and our host, of course, had a collation prepared for us. I got tired of waiting, as I could eat nothing at that hour, and took an abrupt leave, saying I would wait at the house of a Galla on the road, whom I knew. This was a famous warrior, by name Ali Betische, since slain in battle; and having recovered my appetite by some miles of exercise, I partook of some *shirro* and beer with him. If I had entered twenty more houses, I should have had to undergo this ordeal as many times, an Abyssinian not considering it possible that a man can ever have eaten or drunk enough, so long as he can move about. I exchanged a mule with my host, and then joining Amoro Hailo, we went on quickly, being nearly all mounted, and having two days' march to perform. In the afternoon we came up with our suite, and then a council was held in our quarters, as this and the next day's journey were said to be incon-

veniently dangerous, and it was known that the rebels watched all our movements, day and night, and were in large force; their range of hills formed a central position to our circular line of march, so that they could, in one night, easily cut us off a three days' journey.

I saw a decent village, and told Amoro Hailo that, to my thinking, I wished they would come and have it out at once, and therefore I should sleep there for the night, —recommending him to do the same, as I had no idea of being always on the run. He remonstrated a little, and then got frightened, and went off to some quarters, much farther from the hills, which were now only a few miles from me. My people, however, were full of confidence and courage, and I did not much fear the result of a night contest, wherein ten men would be as good as a hundred, if prepared. I accordingly chose a house on the outskirts of the town, clear from everything that could favour an ambush. The landlord told me that it was ten to one we should be assaulted, stating that the troops of the rebels had been in the village during the day, and naming their leaders. As soon as supper was eaten, I had, therefore, my men under arms, and watching all night; and here also, as we learnt afterwards, their preparations for attack were disconcerted by our resolute appearance, and the exaggerated reports made by the village people, to the rebel spies, of our numbers and ferocity.

At daylight we left, and had now to pass a river called the Fincha, famous, at all times, for the bloody combats that have been fought there, for private feuds and robbery, for being frequented by Gallas of the Amoro, who lie in wait for stray passengers, and for its strong current in the rains. Here was a great probability that our enemies would pick up heart, and attack us during the confusion of a steep descent, amid tangled brushwood, and on a narrow pathway. I therefore ordered a dozen men in

front, while I brought up the rear with the rest. Presently screams and cries were heard. I mounted my horse, and galloped on to the front, and there found it was a false alarm, some rascal having plundered a priest who was coming from Dembitcha. I caused the man to restore what he had taken, and we crossed the Fincha, and found Amoro Hailo on the other side of the valley, very anxious about me. Moreover, it appeared that he also was very anxious, for private reasons, to conciliate the town of Dembitcha (the chief town of Damot), which we were now approaching; and had therefore waited, to tender me his good advice to go by another road, whither his people had already gone. This I refused, on the ground (which was true) that we had not had anything to eat the night before, and my men were exhausted with hunger and watching, and that Dembitcha, a town of 5,000 or 6,000 inhabitants, could afford us a supper without missing it. He represented the danger I should meet at the rivers of Bir and Kachum (noted jungles), the next day, before I could join him; but I replied that I trusted to my own sword as much as to what he called his protection, and that, whatever danger might exist, we would meet it with our bellies full. So we parted in wrath, he foretelling an evil end to me. I was soon joined by about fifty shields of his followers, who preferred a good supper to their master's orders, and three hours' ride brought us to Dembitcha about noon.

I gave orders that no one should enter the town, and sent messages to the magistrates and priests, requesting a night's lodging, to which I received answers, that they would come immediately to meet me. On the strength of this reply I waited an hour in the sun, when, knowing pretty well how to arrange these matters, I feigned impatience, and ordered all my party to occupy the houses in the quarter nearest us. This was done on the run,

and, after their custom, pretended shrieks and cries were raised. I myself went to a good house selected for me. In a short time the ringing of the church-bells was heard, and a posse of priests turned out to excommunicate us all. As this was all I required, I professed immense reverence for their sanctities, and left my quarters with the greater part of my followers. Some, however, were snugly ensconced, and not to be moved; and I left my property in my quarters, knowing how things would end. The chief priest at that time was a great blackguard, and I knew him of old; so we palavered and talked, sometimes had a bit of quarrel, &c., till evening; at sunset, after they had exhausted all their arguments for my proceeding on my journey, I demanded, point-blank, whether they would give orders for my lodging and supper. To this a hesitating reply being given, I mounted my mule, and, followed by all hands, with a shout, we reoccupied our quarters, and passed the night very well. It must not be thought that this was any injury, for it is an invariable custom; and we parted the next morning the best of friends with townsmen, priests, and all, except that I had to punish one or two of my followers for their excesses.

We had a good supper sent us by the *shoom* of Dejaj Goscho. The next morning a most dangerous journey was before us, ere we could rejoin Amoro Hailo, now many leagues distant; the rivers we had to pass being clothed with thick jungle, the resort of buffaloes, and affording shelter to any number of robbers, or rebels. After some miles I began to come up with the stragglers, of all kinds, who had accompanied us for escort to Begemder. Old and young, ragged and clothed, male and female, I drove them all before me; and, stopping with a rearguard at all dangerous passes (which I knew pretty well from old acquaintance), forced them on, giving my

own mules and horses to the most feeble, or sick. Thus, making a mile or two an hour, and expecting an attack each moment, we made a forced march of nearly thirty miles.

Towards evening, to my surprise, an old lady seized my bridle on the road, and pressed me to drink some beer. As these offers are never refused in this happy realm, I dismounted, and drank a horn of the strong beer (as strong as good ale), for which Damot is famous, made of barley and a grain called *dagoosa*. The old lady, saying she had a request to make, followed me, and after much hard work, driving on stragglers, &c., I arrived, half an hour after dark, at a village, where a servant of Amoro Hailo met me, saying that his master had gone on, and had left this village for my lodging. I accordingly went there, and going to three or four doors, was answered that the houses were occupied by the Ras's *chaign*, insolent rascals as any in his army. I did my best to find unoccupied places, but the *chaign* had had the impudence to take a house each.

This was too bad, when I had had the fag and danger of the day—and, moreover, save the said beer, had tasted nothing for twenty-four hours; so I gave the order to turn out the 'chaign,' *sans cérémonie*, giving the example myself, by dragging out their chief from the best house in the village. The knave talked much about the Ras's property under his charge; but to this I paid no attention, and presently got my supper from the villagers. The *chaign*, at midnight, begged admittance humbly, when I ordered my followers to admit them to a share of their quarters. One of my fellows was brought to me, on a complaint that he had tied one of the villagers to obtain his supper; so I administered simple justice, by tying him somewhat tighter to a post, before the inhabitants. In an hour, however, they begged him off, saying

that they had only complained with a view of stopping others, and not to get him punished; and his accuser and he had a night together, I suspect, with *boosa*.

On the morrow, being the third day, I came up with Amoro Hailo after a forced march, which took us the whole day, and by this time, my people were half-dead with fatigue, and myself sufficiently indignant at such conduct in my escort, having also, as I said, sick men and women mounted on my own cattle. The fact is, he was in a most unequivocal fright, and running as fast as he could, to get out of danger, and had no encumbrances of baggage; whereas I had, in addition, the poor devils of wayfarers, who were constantly praying me not to forsake them.

On this evening information had been received, nearly amounting to certainty, that a famous chief, named Immer Tasho, had assembled nearly a thousand men to fall upon us, so Amoro Hailo would enter no village that night, but we camped in the open.

I had still, after the Ras's spoliation, a small tent, and my followers had not omitted a foray among the rivers, so that we had a chance of surviving the night. We fenced the camp round with thorns, and set a good watch. Amoro Hailo killed some cows, and sent me meat, with an invitation to step over to his tent and see what we could do for supper.

I was too indignant to do this, and, I am afraid, sent a sufficiently abrupt message that I did not sup with cowards. In the Abyssinian fashion, he was quite indifferent to this, and only redoubled his polite invitation, so I went. Before I sat down, however, I repeated my opinion, that it was most cowardly for a man like him, appointed to conduct me in safety, to be running along at that pace, leaving me behind; moreover, that he was quite welcome to leave me altogether, and that I would

take care of myself. He asked me what I would have him do, as quick marches were the only means of safety. I replied: 'You know nothing about it; our quick marching, or rather running away, dispirits our men, and encourages the enemy, if there be one. If you will take my advice, let us camp here two days, and, if anyone attacks us, have a good stand-up fight. My advice is the more disinterested, as you may escape, even if we are beaten, while I have nowhere to fly to; in any case, it is a more manly course than that we are now taking.' After some more discourse of this nature, we took our supper, consisting of raw and roast beef, with some jars of beer sent by the neighbouring villages, and then stood under arms for the night, with horses saddled, &c.

On the morrow we passed the high range of hills round whose base we had been thus long marching, by the pass of Ahmedamut, dividing the province of Damot from that of Maycha; the ascent, of about 2,000 feet, was steep and fatiguing. On the top we found Amoro Hailo, with all his force: he explained to me that Immer Tasho still hovered near us, and that we must occupy this post for some hours, to allow our people to descend the other side of the hill. Brown heaths stretched round in each direction, with clumps of fir-trees, and a cold piercing air appetised us for breakfast. In this matter the true Abyssinian never fails: in half an hour cows were killed, meat cooked, quantities of bread brought from a great distance, and plenty of beer produced; thus we feasted, each man with his gun or his lance in his hand, and mounted scouts placed at some distance, while the unarmed multitude defiled over the hill. Cloths were held over us to shade us from the sun, and the usual noise, scrambling, and laughter of an Abyssinian feast ensued. Fortunately, there was no mead, and the beer was not strong enough to intoxicate.

In the afternoon we descended the hill, and I found my followers almost exhausted; we helped them on, but it was impossible to reach the nearest village, still some miles distant. In vain the chief represented the danger I incurred. I pitched my tent near a pretty stream, in a luxuriant patch of grass, and refreshed my cattle, though the human ditto had little but rest for their supper. Amoro Hailo camped out also, to his great disgust; but he was afraid to leave me in what was really a dangerous post. I took leave of him the next morning, with an order for two days' rest and refreshment at the town of Devra Mai, in the province of Maycha.

Before arriving there I was met by a deputation, praying me to encamp near the town, to avoid the confusion that would follow if I entered. This being complied with, I received three hundred loaves, beer, &c., and corn for my supper. I also got supplies from some old friends in the town, particularly from one young woman, whom I had not seen for some years, and who had become my daughter, according to a curious custom of adoption in Abyssinia. The ceremony consists, simply, in being permitted to kiss the breast of the adopter, when the person assumes all the privileges of a son or a daughter. In this country, the custom is frequent, and I, being wealthy, had naturally many applications; but never consented, save on this occasion, having been treated with great kindness by the damsel, on my first residence in Maycha, when I had no wealth to recommend me.

The hyænas in these parts are famous for their ferocity, and close by is the mountain of Abbola, reputed to be the dwelling of the King of the Bouddhas, or hyæna-sorcerers of Abyssinia, and where he holds solemn meetings with his subjects on certain nights in the year, whereof gamesome stories are told.

At any rate, shortly after nightfall, the hyænas in great numbers made an actual assault upon our camp, and, penetrating between the huts, tried to drive off the donkeys. There was immediately a desperate confusion, every Abyssinian, as usual, shouting as if for life; women screaming, some starting from sleep, thinking the enemy were at last upon us; dogs barking, donkeys braying, horses and mules breaking loose; and in the midst of this one man, who kept some degree of calmness, shot one of the hyænas dead. The rest, nothing daunted, gibbered and laughed about the body of their comrade, and were only driven away by a general attack of lance and sword. Some order being at last restored, I set gunners to watch. The next night the hyænas came, as usual, in numbers; but, being prepared, we received them warmly, and another was slain. My servants were fully persuaded that these were Bouddhas, and probably relatives of the townspeople of Devra Mai, who wished to prevent us from tarrying there. Having thus for two days recruited our strength and our stomachs, we left Devra Mai on very friendly terms, as I had not permitted a soul to enter the town, which an Abyssinian chief would have found it difficult to do. Indeed, two days before, there had been a desperate fight between the townspeople and some soldiers, in which several lives had been lost.

Our next stage was to the town of Devra Negust, near the Nile, or Abbai; and here a report had been spread that a band of Turks (the general name for all white men) were coming, armed to the teeth with pistols, who were in the habit of eating human flesh, with other atrocities; in consequence, many of the townspeople had fled. In an hour after our arrival, however, they found my fellows so agreeable, and my own manners so innocent, that they all came back and told us this story, whose source we could not trace; and we passed the rest of the day and the night

very pleasantly, and on the best terms with the townspeople. There is a beautiful sycamore here, affording so wide a shade that the market is entirely sheltered from the sun; the whole village is most picturesque, with rocks rising behind; and below, the Valley of the Nile, here flowing placidly, amid verdure and thick trees, affords, with its cultivation, a pleasing prospect. Small trickling rills, in all directions, afford the means of constant irrigation, and noble gardens might be formed in this and other beautiful spots in Abyssinia; but little advantage is taken of the gifts of nature, though plantains and bananas grow almost spontaneously round the church.

The next day, without further adventure, we crossed the same bridge by which we had passed amidst the confused crush of the Ras's army, and were again in Begemder, where we went to seek hospitality at the hands of the nearest wealthy person we knew, and camped near his house.

CHAPTER XXII.

EXCURSION TO THE VALLEY OF THE WOBAS.

ABUNDANCE OF GAME—ELEPHANTS—BUFFALOES—HIPPOPOTAMI—ANTELOPES—RETURN TO YAWISH.

I HAVE mentioned, in a former chapter, that while at Yawish, I made a hunting expedition to the Valley of the Wobas. Although myself without any pretension to being a sportsman, this excursion may furnish information interesting to those who are that way inclined, and I will therefore proceed to describe it.

Three rivers in Gojam—the Boganna, the Getla, and the Shahay—pour, in three glorious waterfalls, over the ledge that everywhere marks the descent to the profound and singular Valley of the Nile, which rolls in majesty nearly 3,000 feet below her tributaries. In the rainy season, when these waters are swollen by the floods of the cold range of hills whence they rise, the roar of the falls may be heard for miles, and the smoke of the spray ascends above the grassy plains which they have left, and mingles with the driving fogs upon the cliffs. They then whirl down precipitous rapids in noise and foam, and form a grand scene where they meet—in the Valley of the Wobas.

In the month of August, this stream rolls its impetuous waters in fifty channels, a mile in width as it approaches the Nile, and with such strength that where it has but a depth of two feet, only the most practised dare attempt

to cross it, the water running up to the chest as against a breakwater; and, when more swollen, no human being can venture into it. Vast patches of elephant-grass grow along the whole of its course, and, where the rocks recede from its banks, large and shady trees on beautiful grassy banks vary the scene. Stones and rocks are rolled down by the fury of its waters, sounding like distant claps of thunder; and it pours into the deep Nile, over a table of smooth rocks, without any fall.

This noble and singular valley, untrodden save by the hunter, or some brigand chief flying from his superior, abounds with wild beasts. Here the elephant roams in the vast jungles that clothe the banks of the Nile; the lion has his lair among the rocks, and the buffalo and hippopotamus find the most congenial home amidst the enormous grasses, through which some channels of the river steal unseen. In the month of August I visited this scene. During the dry season, when the thundering torrent is reduced to a trickling trout-stream abounding in fish, hundreds of Galla horse cross the Nile, to hunt the elephant and buffalo, and frequent collisions occur, between them and their enemies of the Abyssinian side; during the floods, however, only a few daring spirits, of whom many are drowned, cross the Nile on rafts.

Admiring the scenery as I passed on my mule, and listening with pleasure to the roar of the water, suddenly we came on a huge elephant leaning against a tree. Most of my followers had never seen the beast, and stopped with signs of fright: I dismounted, and, passing a bush, found myself within twenty yards of him. The noise of the rapids having prevented the approach of our party from alarming him, he was lazily flapping his vast ears, and evidently enjoying the *otium cum dignitate* that so well becomes the monarch of the forest. I was

not prepared for the encounter, having come with a virtuous resolution to slaughter only buffaloes, provided simply with an ounce rifle and an unhardened ball. The occasion, however, was too tempting. The brave warriors withdrew in breathless silence, and I approached within a few paces, and was levelling my rifle, when an agitated gunner approached, and said, 'My master, stop! What is that he is flapping backwards and forwards?'—pointing to his ears, which the man thought a sign of furious rage. I smiled, and, pushing him away, fired at the insertion of the ear. The poor beast, thus aroused from his magnificent dreams, crouched nearly to the ground, and then, rising to his full height, turned his enormous head and tusks towards me, his trunk uplifted high. There was nothing for it but to stand still; he looked at me, and I, poor pigmy! tried to look at him. He made two steps towards me, and my *cortége* began to run; then, changing his mind, he walked majestically up the valley into a kind of *cul de sac.*

Bell heard the shot and came up. I pointed the beast out to him, and he set off in pursuit, with three or four Abyssinians. I loaded my rifle, and—knowing that the elephant, if he attempted to escape, must come back to where I was—remained at my post. It was not far from noon, and, being a bright day, the heat was overpowering. Presently I heard, up the valley, a species of file-firing, for none of the party had any but the commonest fowling-pieces. At the seventh shot, I saw the elephant towering over the trees, turn, and brushing off his assailants (Bell and another narrowly escaping), come at a rapid shuffling run to where I was stationed. There was an immense shouting of war-cries, and an equally rapid retreat on the part of the warriors that had remained with me. The most courageous of us all was evidently my little dog, a pup of six months old, who had

been the whole time striving to break loose and charge his elephantine majesty—which same little dog I saw singly face, and fly at a lion, at night, on another occasion. Down came the elephant like a moving tower! and I have no hesitation in saying that I should rather have liked to run, but for the false shame, and the absurd idea that it might have been considered cowardly. At about ten paces he first condescended to distinguish my puny form, threw back his ears (which they say means mischief), and, before he could recommence his career, received my ball in his forehead. He staggered for a moment, recovered himself, and, diverging slightly from his course, passed me rapidly, his shadow appearing to fall on me as he went by. One man who stood by me threw his spear, which fell short; the brute then disappeared, and dashed across the foaming Wobas, blood plashing in his footmarks.

I loaded my gun again, and was about to pursue, being now excited, when a messenger met me to say that the elephant was across the water, and that a herd of buffaloes were on this side of it, in a kind of island close by, they having heard nothing through the noise of the waters. I was sauntering after them with my usual indolence, when I was suddenly overtaken by Bell, and a furious warrior with a matchlock; and as the latter would stay to hear nothing, we pushed on with him. We wished to creep through the reeds and close with our game, but the warrior unexpectedly dashed through an opening, and levelled his matchlock at them at about a hundred yards' distance. Bell, seeing this, fired over his shoulder; the warrior also fired, and I (as usual, last) sent my ball into the head. One buffalo fell with his hind-leg broken, whereupon the matchlockman commenced some frantic gyrations, calling upon man and heaven to witness that he had killed the buffalo! I burst out laughing, when, as our men came up to finish the

brute with lances, he quietly rose, gazed at us fiercely for a moment, and then rejoined his companions. In a compact body they began slowly to cross the foaming water, putting the young calves up-stream above, and supporting them and their wounded companion. I snatched a gun from a servant, and, firing, struck another, who staggered; but they all disappeared in the high reeds on the other bank, and left us to hold a council of war. It was decided that the crossing should be attempted, and that we should camp for the night on some rocks on the other side. Just then a hippopotamus began to walk lazily through the water, about a hundred yards above us; another shot hit him, and took about as much effect as it might have done on the walls of Malta; but as a wounded hippopotamus is both cunning and dangerous, and a buffalo still more so, I began to look forward with some nervousness to our passage through the elephant-grass on the other bank, into which all our enemies had now disappeared. To tell the truth, also, I was in a mortal fright regarding the water, whose glancing rapidity was very agreeable to look at, but which I had some misgivings would speedily convey me to the Nile.

There was no help for it, however; so I confided myself to fate, and to the guidance of a stalwart man of Gojam, six-foot-three in height; he was an experienced waterman, and stood like a tower. My legs were carried away immediately; but the huge ruffian held me by one hand as though I had been an infant, and told me to 'take heart!' Conceive, reader, the indignity to an Englishman, bound to be the pluckiest of mankind by land and sea; but possibly, if you had found yourself with your whole length almost floating upon a torrent that made you giddy, you might have pocketed the affront as I did. The actual depth of the water was about up to the knee, but by mutual help we

all got across, the tall Gojamee carrying my gun as well as helping me. We, moreover, passed through the reeds along paths made by the elephant, without encountering a foe, and finally gained the rock of safety, where our future campaigns were to be planned. We were soon seated amongst some huge masses of stones; large, however, as were the blocks, the tracks of elephants were not wanting —and, indeed, the elephants of that district climb most difficult and precipitous passes. The huge carcase of one behind the camp, killed by a celebrated hunter, did not emit a pleasant effluvia.

We lighted some fires, left the youngsters with a guard, and then began to survey the plain before us, and the distant Nile, from the highest rock. Here the guard immediately posted himself with his matchlock, affecting to do so that he might see the better, but in reality not being the bravest of the brave. It being only three o'clock, we set out, in different directions, in search of adventures. The ground was a dead plain interspersed with trees, stony, and covered with a small thorn like a caltrop with three prickles, which, wearing as I did Abyssinian sandals, was anything but a bed of roses to walk on. All traces of the wounded elephant and buffalo were lost; they were found dead about a week afterwards, and I believe the tusks of the former were sent by the Ras to Her Britannic Majesty.

I soon found myself alone. There is a sensation not altogether of valour, yet singularly agreeable, in roaming through woods abounding in wild and dangerous animals, uncertain of what may first meet you. I saw a small boa, and soon after heard a shot; this was fired by an Abyssinian servant, who found the wounded buffalo up the valley; he acknowledged to having fired the shot, and that, on the buffalo making a demonstration, he, being alone, next took a good and hearty run. The brute was, however, too hard

hit to follow the man, and was afterwards found dead. Soon a herd of *agazins*—large antelopes, of the size of a cow, with curved and twisted horns—came down from the hills to drink. I began to stalk them over the plain, and should probably have shot one, but saw another of the party, nearer than myself, also creeping up to them, so I awaited the issue; he fired, and knocked over a fine female. We then joined forces, and employed the evening in cutting up the venison, and carrying it to our camp. The Achilles with the matchlock recited some of his exploits; the night was dark, and, listening to the hippopotami in the reeds, and the distant roar of a lion, we were soon sound asleep. In the morning we expected to take the field early but it is singular that a dew falls here like a heavy rain, and covers the long grass.

When the sun had dried it, we sallied forth, having made a solemn resolve not to fire at elephants, as it was a useless waste of ammunition. We shortly came upon a large herd of those animals, on some low hills about 200 feet high, and there could not have been less than 300 of them. Whilst motionless, they appeared like the blocks of stone near them, but their huge flapping ears betrayed them; occasionally, also, an elder of the tribe would admonish a youngster, almost as big as himself, by giving him a hoist with his huge tusks. There they stood, enjoying themselves (and I think elephantine enjoyment appears of the highest quality), throwing pools of rain-water over their bodies, fanning the flies away with large branches, and every now and then giving out that clear thrilling cry, like the note of a huge clarion.

I sat on an opposite hill, enjoying this spectacle, for half an hour, when Achilles plucked up heart, and moved to the attack, his matchlock being of a larger bore than our fowling-pieces. I volunteered to accompany

him, and have a nearer look at these fine animals; so we crossed the valley, and mounted upwards by the elephant paths; these were so steep, and composed of such huge steps, that we were sometimes obliged to help each other up with our guns. The thorns also were of the worst description I ever saw; strong and penetrating as lances, their wound is very poisonous to the flesh. Arriving on the plateau, we found that the elephants had taken the alarm; but, instead of running, they had formed themselves into two bodies, in the most scientific manner. The females of the nearest were standing in a circle, the young in the centre, and their heads turned outward; towering over the thorns, they appeared to be but a few yards distant, and, to my poor apprehension, looked excessively vicious. Anon a little creature would peep out of this Macedonian phalanx, and would be immediately chastised for its impertinence. We looked on for a few moments, and were almost tempted, but, seeing we had but little powder for the buffaloes, satisfied ourselves that our balls would have no effect on the masses of skull lowering over us, and marched valiantly away in search of buffaloes.

Arrived at the Valley of the Wobas, we found that, no rain having fallen in the night, the stream was so reduced in depth, that we could walk in it without difficulty. Keeping along its course, we saw a favourite resort of the elephants; here was a huge tree, against a branch of which, some sixteen feet from the ground, these animals rubbed their backs. There was also a spring running through reddish earth, and having a strong briny taste; it is much resorted to by all wild beasts, and hither the cows of the villages above are brought, once or twice a year, to drink. There are many of these streams in Abyssinia, where salt is so dear that it is a fortunate thing for the cattle. Here we were told to keep together, with our weapons in our

hands, as this was a favourite spot for a Galla ambush, and the proverb is that 'the Galla hand precedes his mouth.' We saw many traces of buffaloes, but fell in with none, though we went through the reeds in search of them. Here I was considerably startled by a small antelope, called *dookoola*, rushing suddenly out of a clump close beside me.

As we were so near the Nile, we thought we would see the waters at their height, and went to the junction of the Wobas with that river. The stream was magnificent, rolling its strong waters down sometimes without a ripple, at other times in waves. Here and there projections from the banks would cause a foaming eddy; and wherever the back-current produced a kind of whirlpool, hundreds of hippopotami were disporting themselves. The banks were clothed with verdure and jungle, and, on the opposite side, some Gallas were tending their cattle at a salt-spring, such as I have described. Huge trees were rapidly succeeding each other down the stream, torn from their roots by the mighty waters.

We began an onslaught on the hippopotami. These animals rise and fall in the water with a very elegant motion; the grace and power with which they perform this movement, with no apparent effort, is very fine. They sometimes blow through their nostrils like a horse snorting, and it is this action that probably gave them the name of river-horse, by those who had never seen their bodies out of water: otherwise they might have been more disposed to call them river-hogs. On the first shot, the Gallas and their cattle decamped. I shot a hippopotamus, and the body, rolling slowly over, was carried down by the current, for the probable festivity of the adjacent crocodiles. I noticed another very small one, that rose and sunk with its mother, with much pleasure; I could not find it in my heart to shoot at it.

We then crossed the Wobas, and under a large tree

on the other side, a curious ceremony was performed by the Abyssinians, who here are half Gallas, and received this superstition from that fine but rude people. One got up into a tree, and was supposed to represent a spiritual being, the others below reverentially answering the questions he put; these were, if they had committed many sins, and deserved his anger, &c.? After this, as I begged them to cut the matter short, a blessing was pronounced on our health, our persons, wives, children, and cattle; and particular instructions were given for our success in shooting that day, to all which the others responded in chorus what stood for 'Amen.' The spirit then descended, took up his lance, and they all left the spot with enlivened countenances.

Whilst this operation was going on, a man from the hills on the other side was vociferating mightily, but we could not catch the words. It appeared afterwards that he was trying to warn us of a large herd of elephants close by, who would probably walk over us if we did not get out of their way. We went innocently on, and as we took one road, and the elephants another, escaped scot-free.

A little farther on I saw a *dufarsa*, another kind of antelope, nearly as large as the *agazin*. I was setting about a very leisurely stalk, when I suddenly came upon a hippopotamus in one of the by-channels of the Wobas, walking quietly towards me. The indifference of the beast was delightful; he cocked his little pig's eye at me, and I levelled my rifle at him. Then I thought of supper and the *dufarsa*, and lowered it again. The beast stood, and contemplated me so thoughtfully, that I was near laughing in his face; he then walked leisurely on, and disappeared in the reeds. They are not always so quiet, for on another occasion, near the same spot, a hippopotamus cut a man nearly in two with

one bite of his huge jaws, and then carried off comfortably a hundred and fifty lances, as if they were so many pins.

Whilst on the subject, I will mention two other little matters connected with river-pigs, that occurred to me, on another occasion, in this same Happy Valley. We were standing on a high bank commanding a deep and shady pool, enjoying the kind of waltz performed in the water by these animals, and seeing who could hit them with small pebbles as they rose. Below, on the sloping green close to the water, a knot of Abyssinians were chatting carelessly, when, with an activity I should have thought impossible, one animal that lay in the water, apparently asleep, rushed out on them with a loud snort. All ran except the chief, and he, like Asteropæus, wielding a lance in either hand, shouted his war-cry and stood firm. The beast came to within a few paces of him, and, apparently awed by his fierce attitude, returned slowly into the water. It was curious, as they seldom or never attack man unprovoked. I conclude it must have been a female with a young one.

Another large and old hippopotamus lived in a small valley on one side of the Wobas, not consorting with his kind; I heard that he had killed two or three men, had received many severe wounds, and had thereby become a misanthropical river-pig. Passing near his abode, a servant of mine found him hidden in a small pool of water, hardly larger than his body; the man called me, and, as I peeped over the bank, I fancied there was a malignant expression in his eye, the only part to be seen. I left the man to watch, and making a circuit round, got noiselessly to the back, so immediately above where he lay, that when I cautiously protruded my gun the muzzle must have been about two yards from him. It was a common and very indifferent fowling-piece, purchased new, for the large sum of forty shillings. He rose immediately,

but the discharge met him as quickly, and his left eye was extinguished by the ball, which must also have entered his brain; he plunged round and round, and, having made his way out of the stream into a grass patch, began slowly to move towards the Wobas. I loaded promptly, and followed him, and when he got to a bush, he turned his enormous head, with a most grim expression, towards me; my next ball was sent into the centre of his forehead; he then painfully staggered about in the bush, lost his way, came back, and receiving a third shot just behind the ear, his giant bulk lay prostrate, though still breathing. His body was covered with ancient wounds from gun and lance, and I was told the history of some of his exploits by the Abyssinians who knew that country.

To continue my story. The *dufarsa* had taken the alarm and disappeared, and we arrived at our camp somewhat fatigued. Here we were told that a large herd of elephants had been all day camped in the reeds at our feet, bathing, washing, and gambolling, whilst the warriors with matchlocks had perched themselves, in breathless fright, on the highest stones they could select. The Achilles, who had left in the morning, came back in a high state of rage; he had fired two shots at an elephant, who, he said, did not even wink; and so he had left them in despair. He then immediately departed, and returned home up the hills. Towards dusk, another body of eighteen or twenty elephants, with some young ones, came through the open plain in front of us, towards our camp; there was no cover to approach them, so we determined to see the effect of our guns, in a most unsportsmanlike way, on some little calves. I went as near as possible, and as they came up to within about 100 yards, we fired, and two young ones fell. The herd turned and ran, and the mothers took the young in their trunks, and lifted them along at a surprising pace. We made a sally with loud

shouts, and hoped to frighten them into dropping our booty. They stopped, and made a phalanx; one rushed out, threw his trunk in the air with a shrill cry, and one foot uplifted in a most graceful attitude; at this signal, line was formed, and the elephants executed a brilliant charge. It was getting too dark to fire with any effect, and if my sally forth had been vigorous, the pace at which I ran back astonished myself. I felt as buoyant as if upon wings, and the tall Gojamee said it was a most creditable run. Mounting my rock, I felt a large accession of courage, and was congratulated by Bell, who had wisely remained at home, on my agility. The elephants stopped in a heap and slowly melted away, as the darkness stole over their vast forms.

Early next morning we were about to sally forth, to see if the carcases were left, when something fortunately occurred to cause a slight delay, and out from the hills came a fine female elephant, trunk uplifted, and with prodigious strides. She roamed over the plain where her offspring had fallen, throwing her trunk in the air as though to scent out the slaughterers, and, uttering shrill cries, she then hurried away as she came. Although convinced that she would have given us no quarter if she had caught us out of our fortress, I was grieved for the creature's anguish, and felt certain that when its death was beyond a doubt, she had left her offspring in the mountains, and returned to wreak vengeance. The Abyssinians said she went back to bury it; and as for myself, nothing that an elephant should do could astonish me, their intelligence so far surpasses that of all other animals.

We were now getting particularly hungry, the *agazin* being picked to the bones; so we decided to go up the Wobas, which stream was now beginning to fill again. That night we slept in a cave, well sheltered from a pouring rain; at daylight the turbid river, dark and noisy,

now quite completed my discomfiture. I returned to the heights of Gojam and my abode at Yawish, without attempting to cross, and left Bell to the enterprise of the ford. He narrowly escaped, and one man was carried away, with shield and lance, for about a mile; a fortunate eddy, when past human aid, then threw him, bruised and senseless, on a stony bank.

And so, having concluded my unsuccessful hunt, I left the Wobas, delighted with its savage wilderness, and sufficiently philosophical regarding my non-success—satisfied that, at least, nature had never intended me for a sportsman.

CHAPTER XXIII.*

ABYSSINIA IN 1848—KASAI, DEJAJMATCH OF KWORA—HIS CAREER —IS CROWNED AS KING THEODORUS—HIS CHARACTER DESCRIBED— MR. PLOWDEN'S INTERCOURSE WITH THE KING—THE REBEL NEGOUSEE —MR. PLOWDEN'S DEATH—VINDICATION OF HIS CONDUCT—PRESENT STATE OF ABYSSINIA.

THE preceding chapters describe the political and social condition of Abyssinia down to the year 1848. Although the MSS. in my possession end with the account of the mission to Ras Ali in that year, yet Mr. Plowden's private journal, and official documents, enable me to narrate the subsequent changes, down to the present time, and to give a sketch of the character and career of the present ruler, King Theodorus: to these I propose to add an account of Mr. Plowden's death, and a vindication of his conduct.

In 1848, then, Ras Ali was the ostensible ruler of Abyssinia, and acknowledged as such by our Government. Of his two great feudatories, Oobeay, Prince of Teegray, to the north, gave him only a precarious allegiance; while Bourroo, Prince of Gojam, to the south, was in open rebellion against him.

This state of things continued until 1853, when a new actor appeared upon the scene, who, after some vicissitudes, finally, in 1855, by the union of policy and daring, accomplished a complete revolution. This was Kasai, Dejajmatch of Kwora, a province on the borders of

* This and the following chapters are by the Editor.

Sennaar. This chief appears to have aimed at the supreme power from his earliest youth, though for a time he concealed his designs. He began by successfully contesting the authority of the Queen, mother of Ras Ali, under whom he governed his province—defeating her armies, but protesting, all the while, that he was the faithful servant of Ras Ali. When this latter sent a large force against him, in support of the Queen, he still temporised, and with so much success, that a collision was avoided; and the Ras having sworn to do him no injury, he surrendered, and came to Devra Tabor, where he so completely lulled suspicion, that he was restored to all his former honours and provinces. He returned to Kwora, and then attacked the tribes of the low countries towards Sennaar, thus accustoming his soldiers to war and hardships.

At last, in 1853, he threw off the mask, openly revolted, and defeated Dejajmatch Goscho, whom the Ras sent against him. The Ras, now seriously alarmed, sent half his army, under his best commanders, aided by a large contingent from Oobeay, Prince of Teegray, to attack him. Kasai, nothing daunted, met these forces, so superior in number to his own, and signally defeated them, killing most of the chiefs. He then took the daring resolution of attacking the Ras himself, and, arriving by forced marches near the camp of that prince in Gojam, in the rainy season, met him in the open plain, notwithstanding the Ras's superiority in cavalry. The Ras fought with the utmost courage, and the loss of life on both sides was considerable; but Kasai's determined valour again won the day, Ras Ali escaping. After an interval—in which he compelled Oobeay, by threats, to release the Aboona Salama, who had been banished by Ras Ali, and whom he at once reinstated in his dignity at Gondar—he attacked Bourroo Goscho,

Prince of Gojam (who had for years successfully resisted Ras Ali's attempt to subjugate him), defeated him, and took him prisoner.

He was now strong in guns and men, and on his return declared war against Oobeay, accusing him, on just grounds, of treachery. Oobeay met him, with some reluctance, and was defeated and taken prisoner, with all his sons and generals. Kasai then invested Oobeay's stronghold, which surrendered at once.

The fruits of this last victory were large treasures, accumulated for three generations, and the submission or imprisonment of almost all the remaining chiefs. Having thus conquered all, Kasai was crowned, by the Aboona Salama, under the title of 'Theodorus, King of Kings of Ethiopia.'

Theodorus, having thus become supreme, next reduced and annexed Shoa to his empire, and compelled the Gallas to acknowledge his authority—thus bringing the whole of Ethiopia under his sway.

The personal character of this extraordinary man, the reforms he had commenced, and the designs he contemplated, are thus described by Mr. Plowden, in his official report of June 25, 1855:—

'The King Theodorus is young in years, vigorous in all manly exercises, of a striking countenance, peculiarly polite and engaging when pleased, and mostly displaying great tact and delicacy. He is persuaded that he is destined to restore the glories of the Ethiopian Empire, and to achieve great conquests; of untiring energy, both mental and bodily, his personal and moral daring are boundless. The latter is well proved by his severity towards his soldiers, even when these, pressed by hunger, are mutinous, and he is in front of a powerful foe; more so even by his pressing reforms on a country so little used to any yoke, whilst engaged in unceasing hostilities; and

his suppression of the power of the great feudal chiefs, at a moment when any inferior man would have sought to conciliate them as the stepping-stones to empire.

'When aroused, his wrath is terrible, and all tremble; but at all moments he possesses a perfect self-command. Indefatigable in business, he takes little repose night or day: his ideas and language are clear and precise; hesitation is not known to him, and he has neither counsellors nor go-betweens. He is fond of splendour, and receives in state even on a campaign. He is unsparing in punishment—very necessary to restrain disorder, and to restore order, in such a wilderness as Abyssinia. He salutes his meanest subject with courtesy, is sincerely though often mistakenly religious, and will acknowledge a fault, committed towards his poorest follower in a moment of passion, with sincerity and grace.

'He is generous to excess, and free from all cupidity, regarding nothing with pleasure or desire but munitions of war for his soldiers. He has hitherto exercised the utmost clemency towards the vanquished, treating them rather as his friends than his enemies. His faith is signal. "Without Christ," he says, "I am nothing; if He has destined me to purify and reform this distracted kingdom, with His aid who shall stay me?" Nay, sometimes he is on the point of not caring for human assistance at all, and this is one reason why he will not seek with much avidity for assistance from, or alliance with, any European power.

'The worst points in his character are his violent anger at times, his unyielding pride as regards his kingly and divine right, and his fanatical religious zeal.

'He had begun to reform even the dress of Abyssinia, all about his person wearing loose-flowing trousers, and upper and under vests, instead of the half-naked costume introduced by the Gallas. Married himself at the altar,

and strictly continent, he has ordered or persuaded all who love him to follow his example, and exacts the greatest decency of manners and conversation: this system he hopes to extend to all classes.

'He has suppressed the slave-trade in all its phases, save that the slaves already bought, may be sold to such Christians as shall buy them for charity: setting the example, he pays to the Mussulman dealers what price they please to ask for the slaves they bring to him, and then baptizes them.

'He has abolished the barbarous practice of delivering over murderers to the relatives of the deceased, handing over offenders, in public, to his own executioners, to be shot or decapitated.

'The arduous task of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task achieved in Europe only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous, avowing his intention of liberating them when his power shall be consolidated. He has placed the soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish: thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains, more proud of their birth than of their monarch, and organising a new nobility—a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen specially for their daring and fidelity.

'To these he gives sums of money from time to time, accustoming them to his intention of establishing a regular pay; his matchlockmen are numbered, under officers commanding, from 100 to 1000, and the King drills them in person. In the common soldiers he has effected a great reform, by paying them, and ordering them to purchase their food, but in no way to harass and plunder the peasant, as before; the peasantry he is

gradually accustoming to live quiet, under the village judge, and to look no more to military rule. As regards commerce, he has put an end to a number of vexatious exactions, and has ordered that duties shall be levied only at three places in his dominions. All these matters cannot yet be perfected; but he intends also to disarm the people, and to establish a regular military force, armed with muskets only, having declared that he will convert swords and lances into ploughshares and reaping-hooks, and cause a plough-ox to be sold dearer than the noblest war-horse.

'He has begun to substitute letters for verbal messages. After perusing the History of the Jesuits in Abyssinia, he has decided that no Roman Catholic priests shall teach in his dominions; and, insisting on his right divine over those born his subjects, has ordered the Abyssinians who have adopted that creed to recant. To foreigners of all classes, however, he permits the free exercise of their religion, but prohibits all preaching contrary to the doctrine of the Coptic Church. To the Mahomedans he has declared that he will first conquer the Gallas, who have seized on Christian lands, devastated churches, and, by force, converted the inhabitants to Islamism; and, after that, the Mussulmans now residing in Abyssinia will have the option of being baptized or of leaving the country.

'He is peculiarly jealous, as may be expected, of his sovereign rights, and of anything that appears to trench on them; he wishes, in a short time, to send embassies to the great European Powers, to treat with them on equal terms. The most difficult trait in his character is this jealousy, and the pride that, fed by ignorance, renders it impossible for him yet to believe that so great a monarch as himself exists in the world.

'Some of his ideas may be imperfect, others impracticable; but a man who, rising from the clouds of

Abyssinian ignorance and childishness, without assistance and without advice, has done so much, and contemplates such large designs, cannot be regarded as of an ordinary stamp.'

Such was Mr. Plowden's estimate of the character of the man whom he had originally known as Kasai, an estimate more than confirmed by his subsequent intercourse with him as King Theodore.

When intelligence of the final success and coronation of Theodorus reached Mr. Plowden, he was at Massowah, in bad health, preparing to embark for Europe on leave of absence. But a political change so complete made it an imperative duty to visit the new monarch, who had already invited him, and expressed his desire for the friendship of the English. Accordingly he cancelled his leave, and in March, 1855, left Massowah for the King's camp, a step which met with the 'entire approval' of his superior, Lord Clarendon.*

Although he contemplated an absence of a few months only, he was detained in the interior for five years, by the exigencies of duty, by severe and repeated attacks of illness, and lastly owing to the road to Massowah being closed by a rebel chief.

During this period of enforced absence, he was in constant official communication with the King, and a very intimate friendship, founded on mutual respect and esteem, subsisted between them.

Some of their private conversations in this period, recorded in Mr. Plowden's journal, are curious; and as illustrations of the salient points of the King's character —his strong religous feeling, his pride and jealousy of authority, and his desire for the friendship of England —the following extracts may not be uninteresting:—

* *Vide* Mr. Hammond's letter, No. 224, dated September 12, 1855, in the Abyssinian Blue Book.

'On one occasion the King said to me, "You and Bell only love me. Abyssinians are governed by God's will, and I have yet much to do. What if I died to-night (cholera was then raging), or turned monk, but that God wills me for this work? If you gave me this room full of gold, of what use would it be to me? I wish for knowledge, to avoid the necessity of severe punishment, and to put my country in order;" and he several times observed, "As God has given this throne to me, a beggar, so let Him give me knowledge."

'Again, on another occasion, previous to his departure on a campaign, when I refused to receive his gifts, he said to me, "You are my son—why not receive from me what you want?" I explained my orders; he replied, "Never mind; my ambassadors (an embassy was then under arrangement) shall receive from your Government. Our country requires us to be hospitable—we must wash the feet of strangers; by whose power are we now in a house, and not in a wilderness? I do not give you pay or raiment—I only give you bread and water. You must receive them. I know you are richer than I am, but now it is only a loan, and you will repay me hereafter in deeds. I shall build many houses with your assistance." I replied, "I am nothing; my Queen only can be of use to you." He said, "Listen! Without God's permission, all the kings of the earth could not prevail against me, and I fear them not; but your Queen, a Christian, has sent you to me, and faith unites us. Christ wills our friendship. God may design me good in this." He then called me apart, and offered me 1000 dollars, to enable me to live in comfort in his absence, which I refused. He then took my hand, and said, "All men are mortal; if anything happens to me, befriend my son. Write to your country; say you had a friend who loved you all, and who intended to send an embassy to

you for your friendship, and beg them to support my son." I assented; he said, "I love and trust you—good-bye!"

'Again, on another occasion, he said, "What is glory compared to one's soul?" told me he loved me, and begged me to pray for him, that God might give him a good heart. He also praised us, and that more than once, for our translation of the Bible, and expressed his desire for its dissemination throughout his dominions.

'His proud and suspicious nature would, however, sometimes overpower his religious feeling. In 1856, the Patriarch of Alexandria, the head of the Abyssinian Church (in fact, its Pope), visited him. The King received him with profound respect and humility; but his suspicions being afterwards roused, by an indiscreet proposition, he got into one of his furies, called him an emissary of Syud Pacha (of Egypt), and imprisoned him. I cautiously but successfully endeavoured to moderate this passion, and the King's religious feeling reasserting itself, he fancied that, in releasing and reconciling himself with the Patriarch, he had conquered Satan.

'On another occasion he said, "I mistrust much. All men say that Turks and Franks only come to take your country from you; and if I did not love you personally, I should have sent you away on the first mention of a consulate." He then said, "You must make me friends with your Queen." I replied, "That is what I came for." He said, "Better be destroyed by you, who believe in Christ, than be saved by the Turks!" I told him that our greatness was owing to our study of the Gospel; he said, "Your eating is better than our fasting." He again praised highly our translation of the Bible.'

While these traits show that this king is not, or at least was not, the monster he is now painted by some, his conduct, in the matters in which my brother had official

communication with him, prove him to have been a man of clear judgment and political foresight, and, according to his light, not without humanity. Thus he abolished the slave-trade, and it was not his fault that this law, owing to the Turks and Egyptians, became a dead letter. In his disputes with the latter (and these were frequent, the frontiers of the two countries being conterminous), he was always reasonable, and willing to avoid the extremity of war, and he showed both sense and resolution in his religious policy. Tolerant of all creeds, he placed no restrictions on Protestants or Roman Catholics in the exercise of their religion, but prohibited *propagandism*. This prohibition was elicited by the proceedings of the Roman Catholic Mission. He saw that this propagandism, on the part of the Roman Catholic Church, supported as it was by France, was a political game, and as such he set his face against it. But he desired the dissemination of the Bible, and he did not interfere with Protestant missionaries, because he saw their sincerity, and an entire absence of political intrigue in their proceedings. In short, he was an honest man, striving to be just, resolute, firm and not cruel, but erring only from ignorance or mistaken religious zeal. This was Mr. Plowden's opinion, and no man knew him so well, or was more capable of understanding him.

Although the King had successfully overcome all his rivals, he had been unable to consolidate his conquests, and rebellions against his authority were frequent. Nor was foreign aid wanting to stimulate them.

Thus, while the King was employed at a distance in the Galla country, a chief named Agow Negousee—who had been an officer of no note under Oobeay, and a prisoner on parole of the King—set up the standard of rebellion in Teegray, and for five years maintained himself there, pillaging the country around, and even Gondar

itself, defeating the King's lieutenants, and closing the road to Massowah. His success was the more easy (in the King's absence), as he was aided by the French, who had acknowledged him as King, and supplied him with arms and ammunition.

In February 1860, however, the King returned and entered Teegray, and on his appearance Dejaj Negousee retreated; the road thus becoming open (though for a short time only, as it turned out), Mr. Plowden took advantage of the circumstance to leave Devra Tabor, on his return to Massowah and England. At this time his health was completely gone, and he had had the further misfortune to break his leg in the preceding November—a serious casualty, in a country where no surgical aid was to be obtained. The last entry in his journal affectingly records his helplessness and consciousness of risk: 'Still very weak, but must go.' He had arrived near Gondar, when he was intercepted by a large body of rebels, under one Garred, an officer of Negousee. Weak and helpless, and without any escort, he was wounded and taken prisoner, and only released on payment of a ransom of 1000 dollars, to be carried into Gondar to die.

It is a painful reflection that his death was caused by political motives. There was no personal enmity between him and Garred, as insinuated by the French Consul Rousseau, in an *on dit*,* and he had been hitherto on friendly terms with Negousee, who, when he plundered Gondar, did not molest Mr. Plowden, though he remained in the town, and even, at his intercession, released a French merchant, whom he had confined in chains, for a very small ransom. But, since then, Negousee had found intimate allies in the French, and there is too much reason to believe that my brother's life was taken

* Enclosure in despatch, No. 308, dated May 29, 1860, in the Abyssinian Blue Book.

to please these allies. Not that I would insinuate the complicity of the French in his murder: but when it is remembered that French interests were identified with Negousee, whom they had acknowledged as King; that they both dreaded and disliked Mr. Plowden's support of Theodore, and his exposure of their intrigues to his own Government; that they had accused him (most unjustly, as will afterwards appear) of hostility to the Roman Catholic Mission; and that, at that very juncture, a French naval squadron, evidently sent to give a moral support to Negousee, was at Massowah, the commanding-officer of which was the first to receive intelligence of Mr. Plowden's death, by a congratulatory message from Negousee himself,—it is not, I think, unreasonable to suppose, in the absence of any other assignable motive, that Negousee, considering him an obstacle to their joint designs, ordered and authorised the attack on him, under the idea that it would be acceptable to his French patrons.

Thus perished a gallant gentleman in the prime of life, and in the service of his country! His death was regarded as a public calamity by both natives and foreigners, and was deeply lamented and fearfully avenged by King Theodore, who slew Garred, and took Negousee prisoner, and put him to death. In England his melancholy end excited no attention; nor did his superiors express any commiseration for his untimely fate, nor any sympathy with his relatives for their great loss. On the contrary, his honest and able services were forgotten; and when recent events brought his name prominently before the public, disparagement of his services, and aspersions on his character, were resorted to by officials, who hoped to find, in a dead man, a safe scapegoat for their own shortcomings.

It is incumbent on me, as a duty, to vindicate my

brother's memory, and I will, therefore, briefly notice these charges, which, indeed, derive their importance solely from the authorities who enunciated them.

Mr. Layard, then Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in his place in the House of Commons, accused my brother of 'disobedience of orders, of neglecting and departing from the object of his appointment, of plunging into local intrigues, and mixing himself up with local conflicts; that he was nothing but Consul to Massowah, with permission to trade, and prohibited from visiting the interior.' These accusations appear to have been endorsed by his superior, Earl Russell, judging from the instructions issued by him to Mr. Plowden's successor, dated February 2, 1861.*

With respect to his consular position, it is sufficient to refer to the 'London Gazette' of January 21, 1848, in which Mr. Plowden is appointed 'Consul in Abyssinia,' and to his despatch (No. 9) of November 15, 1858, in which he showed the Government that he had performed the consular duties at Massowah only by the tacit permission of the Turks; that he had no exequatur from that Government, nor could he hoist the English flag; that his own proper duties were in Abyssinia, and rather those of an envoy than consular, and, on these grounds, recommending the appointment of a vice-consul at Massowah, under a Turkish exequatur.

As to trading, Mr. Layard forgot to mention (what he might have learnt in his own office), that Mr. Plowden declined to exercise this privilege, because it would have compromised the dignity looked for in a representative of Her Britannic Majesty.† As to the prohibition to visit the interior, no such order was ever issued in his lifetime. His visits to the interior were inseparable (as

* *Vide* Abyssinian Blue Book, p. 199.
† Despatch (No. 9), dated May 19, 1857, and enclosure.—*Ibid.*

will be shown) from the duties required of him, and were always duly reported to the Foreign Office, and invariably approved of.

With regard to the charge of disobedience of orders, and neglecting and departing from the object of his appointment, I can only say that not a single instance of either has as yet been brought forward, either by Earl Russell or Mr. Layard, nor does anything of the kind appear in the Blue Books on Abyssinia. I have a right, therefore, to assume that no such instance exists, and that this charge also was as recklessly made as the others.

To the charge of plunging into local intrigues, and mixing himself up with local conflicts, I give the most emphatic denial. It is difficult to do more, to assertions unsupported by a single fact; but I may observe that my brother was in Abyssinia for four years as a private individual, and during this period travelled over a great portion of the country, visiting and being on friendly terms with all the great chiefs—Ras Ali, Oobeay, Bourroo Goscho, and Toko Brillay, who were often at feud with one another; and that he could not have done this had he become a partisan of either, or mingled in local intrigues and conflicts. On one occasion only did he take an active part in local conflicts, and then under compulsion, in the Galla country, as narrated by himself in a preceding chapter.* It is true his life was often in danger, but never from the chiefs—only from bandits and inferior rebels.

If the reason which thus obviously prevented him from becoming a partisan when he was his own master had any force, it would operate with increased effect when he became the servant of the Government. He could not have carried on his duties for a day, if he had identified himself with any of the contending parties. On

* See Chapter XIV.

one occasion he incurred the wrath of the King's general, for not joining him in the field against Negousee, and he quotes the circumstance in his despatch of October 28, 1855,* as an instance of their ignorance of the laws of civilised life; and yet, if he could ever have forgotten his duty, it would have been in favour of King Theodore.

It is true he admired this man, but not blindly. He admired him because he saw his superiority to his countrymen, and that he was the only one capable of restoring order and introducing reforms; he desired therefore to aid him, by all legitimate means, in consolidating his power, as on this, in his opinion, depended the introduction of that civilisation from Europe which he so much desired. He thus always gave Theodore his moral support (and no other) as King *de facto*, acknowledged by his Government. But that Mr. Plowden was no such reckless partisan, as is implied in these charges, and directly alleged by Dr. Beke, is proved not only by the fact above stated, but further, that when the French gave material aid, in arms and munitions of war, to the rebel Negousee, Mr. Plowden, instead of proposing to give similar aid to Theodore (which would have been quite justifiable), earnestly recommended to his Government to obtain the co-operation of that of France in maintaining an absolute neutrality between the parties, until Fortune should decide between them, and then to negotiate with the victor.†

It was this moral support of King Theodore which made Mr. Plowden obnoxious to the King's opponents, and hence the calumny which perverted this support into active partisanship. How far his accusers were justified in circulating this calumny, unsupported by one iota of evidence, I leave it to my readers to decide.

Although the King had again (in 1860) successfully

* *Vide* Abyssinian Blue Book, p. 157.
† Despatch (No. 10), dated June 1, 1859.

vindicated his supremacy, by crushing the rebel Negousee, other rebellions afterwards arose. Wherever he appeared in person he was irresistible, but his lieutenants, whether from incapacity or treachery, were not always equal to their duties. Thus, no sooner had the King gone in one direction, than a rebel would appear in another, and, like the Hydra's head, as fast as one was subdued another would arise.

This state of things has continued to the present time. In Teegray, to the north, his own governor of that province, Kasai, son of Sabagardis, taking advantage of the King's absence, is in rebellion, while Menelek, son of the late King of Shoa, is in arms in the south. Neither of these dare to face him alone, and they are too distrustful of each other to combine. The telegrams which one day announce these chiefs to be in imposing force and threatening an attack, and in the next proclaim that they have disappeared, clearly show the relative power of the parties. There is no doubt of the King's superiority in resources, as well as in ability, and no reason to suppose that the career of these rebels will be less ephemeral than that of their predecessors.

CHAPTER XXIV.

POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH ABYSSINIA—TURKISH AND EGYPTIAN AGGRESSIONS—THE MISSION OF THE PROPAGANDA OF ROME—FRENCH PROCEEDINGS—SLAVE-TRADE—LORD RUSSELL'S POLICY—CAUSE OF THE IMPRISONMENT OF CAPTAIN CAMERON AND MR. RASSAM—FUTURE POLICY.

When the present complication with Abyssinia arose, a very general ignorance prevailed on the subject of the political relations of England with that country. Nor has more than a partial light been since thrown on this darkness by official disclosures. It may not be amiss, therefore, to give such a sketch of these relations, during Mr. Plowden's consulate from 1848 to 1860, as will enable my readers to form some opinion, not as to past occurrences only, but as to what should be the future policy of England towards Abyssinia. I shall use for this purpose Mr. Plowden's private diaries and official documents only, and will advance nothing that cannot be substantiated by the latter.

The Treaty with Ras Ali, in 1849, was the commencement and foundation of the subsequent official intercourse between the two countries. This treaty, nevertheless, remained a dead letter throughout the reign of Ras Ali —that is to say, till 1855—and was never recognised at all by his successor, King Theodore. Mr. Plowden's position under this treaty was thus defined by himself: 'I am consul in name only, having no consular powers, no foreign commerce, no mercantile interests, and no British subjects to protect.' In this state of things, it

is obvious that serious political considerations alone could have caused Her Majesty's Government to maintain a British consul in Abyssinia. And, in point of fact, the real duties were political, and rather those of an envoy, or of a resident at an Indian court (to which Mr. Plowden himself compared it), than consular. They were such as to require his presence in the interior, and personal communication with the King; and it was, moreover, in this capacity only, that he was listened to by King Theodore, who steadily refused to receive him as consul, because of the judicial powers conferred on that functionary by the Treaty.

As the political representative of England, then, there were there especial subjects which were constantly demanding his attention, under the instructions, be it always understood, of the Foreign Office. These were—Turkish and Egyptian aggressions on the Abyssinian frontiers; the proceedings of the Roman Catholic Mission of the Propaganda, and of the French in support thereof; and the suppression of the Slave Trade.

The Turks claim the whole of the seacoast on the mainland as far as Babelmandel, and Abyssinia itself as a Pachalic, though they have never had a footing in that country, and are in possession of the island of Massowah only. The Egyptians on the north-west frontier, having no pretensions to sovereignty, are actuated only by territorial ambition or religious fanaticism. Both give effect to their respective ideas by attempts on the seacoast, and by raids into the frontier Christian provinces of Abyssinia. They destroy villages, plunder cattle and other property, and carry off the women and children into slavery, offering to the inhabitants the choice of the Koran as their only means of escape from the sword.

These aggressions would naturally provoke reprisals, and thus a constant irritation subsist, which might at

any moment break out into open hostilities, dangerous to the peace of Europe. The opinion of Her Majesty's Government in respect to these aggressions is very decidedly expressed by Lord Clarendon, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in his despatch to the Consul-General of Egypt, dated June 30, 1854: 'You will state to the Pacha, distinctly, that Her Majesty's Government will not acquiesce in any assumption, either on the part of the Porte or that of himself, of any authority over the independent territories of Abyssinia; and that Her Majesty's Government will watch over the interests of the Christians in that country, and not allow them to be maltreated or oppressed by their Mussulman neighbours.'* At the same time, observing a due impartiality between the parties (for King Theodore openly avowed his right to Massowah, and to a certain portion of the Egyptian territory, and his intention, when able, to enforce it), his Lordship instructed Mr. Plowden to impress on the King, that any aggression on his part would involve the loss of the friendship of England. It is but just to King Theodore to state that, though he persisted in his claim, he was willing to abstain from hostilities, so long as his enemies were also restrained in their aggressions; and thus the joint action of the Consul in Abyssinia and Her Majesty's Consul-General in Egypt was constantly required to keep the peace between these parties.

The duties imposed on Mr. Plowden by the conduct of the Roman Catholic Mission of the Propaganda, and by French intervention in its behalf, were even more delicate and arduous. It is notorious that the French have long endeavoured to obtain a footing in Abyssinia and on the seacoast. Various projects, such as pretended grants and purchases of land, have been tried as a means to this end; but during Mr. Plowden's consulate (that is to say,

* *Vide* Abyssinian Blue Book, p. 89.

from 1855 to 1860), the Roman Catholic religion was made the pretext, and the Mission of the Propaganda at Rome, the stalking-horse used for the purpose. This Mission, at the same time, had its own designs, which were to subvert the Abyssinian or Eastern Church, and to substitute the Pope of Rome and the Bishop of the Mission for the Patriarch of Alexandria and the Aboona. This Bishop, Mons. De Jacobis, a man of evangelical character and of unflinching zeal, having persisted in preaching the doctrines of his Church, was ordered to leave the country by Dejaj Kasai. This was in 1854, and the country referred to was Gondar and its neighbourhood, then in the possession of Kasai. Bishop De Jacobis had retired to Gondar, on his previous expulsion from Teegray by Oobeay, the ruler of that province, and it is a significant fact that both these princes, rivals as they then were for the supreme power, were of one accord in respect to the pretensions and proceedings of this Mission.

The Bishop refused to obey this order, and was for a time under surveillance; but as events went on, and Kasai in the following year became King, the Bishop appears to have thought better of it, and to have retired to Hallai, on the northern frontier. He did not, however, there acquiesce in his sentence, but appealed to Rome, and through Rome to France, being supported in these proceedings by the French Consul-General in Egypt, and the Vice-Consul at Massowah. By these means he obtained the intervention of the French Government, through Count Walewski, then ambassador at London. Relying on this support, the Mission and the Vice-Consul next proceeded to assist and support, as against the King, a chief named Agow Negousee, who had, in the meanwhile, rebelled and got possession of the province of Teegray. They acknowledged him as the King of Abyssinia, made treaties with him, and supplied him with arms and

ammunition. Negousee, in return, sent presents, which were received by the Vice-Consul in the name of his Government; and an embassy from the so-called King to the Emperor of the French, escorted by a proselyte recommended by Mons. De Jacobis, was conveyed to Europe in a French vessel of war.

I should have been content to have recorded these facts without comment; but as the French Vice-Consul, M. Munzinger, has been pleased to charge my brother with hostility to the Mission, and with having caused its expulsion, I am compelled to give a more detailed account of the circumstances, and of his conduct.

When the Roman Catholic Mission was expelled by Dejaj Kasai, in 1854, as above stated, Mr. Plowden was not in Abyssinia at all, but at Taka, in Egypt, and consequently knew nothing about it; nor had he at that time any relations with Kasai, nor did he visit him till the following year, on his becoming King. Thus, hostile or not, it was impossible he could have caused the expulsion of the Mission. An ardent admirer and advocate of religious freedom, Mr. Plowden had no hostility to creeds, nor desired to favour the Protestant at the expense of the Catholic; and how little hostility he felt towards Mons. De Jacobis and his Mission, may be estimated from the following letter, addressed by him to that prelate in June 1855 :—

Gondar, le 25 juin 1855.

M. L'ÉVÊQUE.—Dans une conversation à Hallai, il me paraît de vous avoir entendu dire que vous étiez résolu d'écrire un pamphlet circulaire à tous les rois d'Europe au sujet de la persécution des Catholiques Romains en Abyssinie, et par quelques-unes de vos expressions vous paraissiez de vouloir dire que j'étais moi une cause partielle de la susdite persécution.

A présent j'ai l'honneur de vous dire que j'ai parlé au roi Theodorus et à l'Aboona sur ce sujet. L'Aboona a exprimé franchement sa détermination de ne pas permettre à la mission de prêcher dans sa diocèse, et il a dit: 'Qu'est-ce que dirait

l'évêque de Rome si quelqu'un de ma part irait à Rome pour rebaptiser les adultes déjà accueillis par une église chrétienne ?'

Le roi, qui ne se laisse mener par l'Aboona, ni par qui que ce soit, a encore déclaré qu'il ne permettrait jamais qu'aucune doctrine soit prêchée en Abyssinie que celle de l'évêque d'Alexandrie et de l'Aboona; mais qu'il accorderait à tous les étrangers la liberté de demeurer tranquillement, à condition de ne pas se mêler avec la doctrine et la foi actuelle du pays.

Il a offert cette choix à M. Just d'Urbin, et sur son refus l'a renvoyé de l'Abyssinie avec ses biens et un passeport, M. Bell devenant caution pour qu'il ne rentre point.

Le père Gabro Michael étant apporté en jugement devant le roi, refusait de reconnaître son autorité, et même de répondre à ses questions. Par la concile des juges il était condamné à mort pour contumace à son souverain. Le roi disait: 'Vous êtes né mon sujet, et vous niez mon autorité; votre changement de religion ne peut m'ôter à moi mes droits de souveraineté; non seulement vous, mais l'Aboona, je le punirais s'il osait nier ma suprématie. Le père allait être fusillé, quand j'obtenais avec difficulté la grâce de sa vie, mais le roi se refusait opiniâtrement à ma proposition de le laisser aller libre.

J'allais obtenir la liberté des cinq ou six personnes en prison à Gondar, mais comme elles s'étaient déjà échappées, mes démarches n'étaient pas nécessaires. Je n'ai pas le droit, M. l'Évêque, de donner aucune opinion sur vos procédés dirigés par vos supérieurs et par votre conscience, mais j'espère que votre bon jugement vous portera à ne pas exposer les habitants d'Hallai à la colère du roi déjà bien éveillée contre eux, à cause de votre résidence dans cette ville. Sur votre opinion de mon interférence, j'espère que le temps l'adoucira, et comme je ne veux entrer en aucune disputation, je garderais le silence sur ce point-là. Soyez, cependant, persuadé, Monseigneur, que quoique peut-être n'étant pas d'accord entièrement avec vous sur la sagesse, humainement parlant, des moyens que vous avez cru les meilleurs d'employer pour la réussite de votre mission, je sais toujours respecter la loyauté et la sincérité désintéressée, et les autres qualités estimables que vous avez toujours déployées dans ce pays. Excusez la hardiesse de mes louanges et agréez, Monseigneur, l'assurance de mon amitié sincère et de mes sentiments de la plus haute vénération et estime.

There was, indeed, no need of sectarian hostility. The enmity of King Theodore was notorious, and the hostility of such a man required no jogging. This King did not admire the doctrines of the Church of Rome; in his eyes a Jesuit and a Roman Catholic were synonymous, and he had not forgotten—what had passed into tradition—how his country had been deluged in blood by similar attempts in the time of the Portuguese. Accordingly, he repeatedly declared, that while he would receive and protect all Europeans, of any nation, he would not permit the Mission to preach, because Mons. De Jacobis, trampling on the Established Church of Abyssinia, taught the doctrine of implicit obedience to the Pope of Rome—a doctrine which he regarded as subversive of the ancient institutions of his country, and dangerous to his own authority.

It was difficult, nay impossible, to find an answer to this; so the Roman Catholic Mission raised the cry of 'Tolerance,' the French Government re-echoed it, and the British Government directed the Consul to impress it on the King. This, as the Consul remarked, was raising a false issue. It was not a question of religious freedom and preaching the Gospel. If the Mission had confined itself to the latter, like the Protestant Missions, it would have been equally unmolested, and allowed all the rights of the former. The real issue was, whether the Pope of Rome or the Patriarch of Alexandria should appoint the head of the Abyssinian Church? The King saw that this was the issue, and met it like a king; and who can blame him?

The above facts were known to M. Munzinger,* and it seems impossible to resist the conclusion that this charge against the late British Consul was invented by him, in order to furnish a pretext for French intervention.

* This gentleman, the French Vice-Consul, notorious for his hostility to British interests, has since been appointed acting British Vice-Consul, on the recommendation of Mr. Rassam.—*Vide* Abyssinian Blue Book, p. 420.

The suppression of the Slave Trade was the remaining subject which occupied the Consul's attention. In this matter the King was in accord with the British Government. One of his first acts, on attaining to supreme power, was to abolish this odious traffic throughout his dominions; and he proved his earnestness by subsequently releasing all the Galla prisoners, about 2,000 in number, whom he found in the caravans—confiscating, at the same time, all the property of the traders who had thus disregarded his proclamations.

The difficulty was, and is, with Turkey and Egypt. The Galla countries to the south of Abyssinia, and the Christian provinces of Abyssinia, on the north-west frontier, are slave-preserves of these two Mahomedan kingdoms; and the isle of Massowah, 'that barracoon of slavery' (as the late Consul-General of Egypt, Sir F. Bruce, styled it) is the depôt of the former, whence the slaves are exported to Jeddah—as Kessala, the capital of Taka, is of the latter—where they are openly sold. It was the dread of European interference with their favourite institution, that made the appointment of a British Consul in Abyssinia, with his quarters at Massowah, so distasteful to the Turkish governor of that place, that he thwarted Mr. Plowden in every possible way, accompanied by insults and outrages so gross as to require and receive the energetic interference of the British Government and Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople. And so long as Massowah remains in the hands of the Turks, or until the Naib on the mainland is declared subject to the King of Abyssinia, this iniquity will prosper; while, on the Egyptian side, the rectification of the boundaries of the two countries, and the appointment of a vice-consul at Kessala, will alone avail to check the trade in that quarter.

These, then, were the principal duties which devolved on

Mr. Plowden during the last five years of his life. They were discharged principally under the instructions of Lord Clarendon, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Ministry of Lord Palmerston, and their importance may be estimated from the fact that Her Majesty's Government have not thought it right to include the really important portion of the correspondence on these subjects in the papers presented to Parliament by order, as the return to Mr. Bernal Osborne's motion of December 2, 1867. Although the publication of these documents would, I am confident, have produced a very favourable impression as to the prudence, judgment, and ability with which my brother discharged these difficult duties, and have rendered any other vindication of his conduct unnecessary, yet I cannot venture to impugn a reserve which the responsible Minister of the Crown has thought it necessary to exercise in the interest of the country. Contenting myself, therefore, with guaranteeing the truth of all I have above written, I proceed with the history of our political relations with Abyssinia subsequent to my brother's death.

In 1860 Earl Russell became Foreign Secretary. At that time the political situation with respect to Abyssinia was this. There was a King on the throne whom Her Majesty's Government had recognised as such, had entered into negotiations with him, assured him of its goodwill, and arranged to receive an embassy from him. In 1861, Captain Cameron was appointed 'Consul in Abyssinia,' and Theodore was then without a rival, having vanquished the only remaining rebel, Negousee.

Earl Russell, however, whether ignorant or regardless of this, and of all that had been doing in Abyssinia under his predecessors, at once initiated a new policy. Commencing with his instructions to the new Consul, he systematically ignored the King, called him 'one of the contending

parties,'* disregarded his letters and messages,† and refused to receive his Embassy without further information.‡ When constrained to show the King some courtesy, in return for his having paid the ransom of the late Consul, he sent him a rifle and a pair of pistols, as an acknowledgment from Her Majesty the Queen, but without any accompanying letter; and when, three months after, apparently ashamed of this ungraciousness, he attempted to remedy it in the letter he then sent, he gave the title of 'Highness' to the man who had been acknowledged as King by the British Government.§

Let us endeavour to realise the situation, as King Theodore would probably have viewed it in these proceedings. A Consul, or rather a representative of Her Majesty's Government, who had been entrusted with the management of great questions, and had maintained an intimate and confidential intercourse with the King of Abyssinia, with the most friendly relations, was succeeded by a functionary to whom the title of representative or envoy was denied—whose proceedings, though analogous to those of his predecessor, were repeatedly censured—who was told to withdraw himself from all these matters, to cease his visits to the interior, and to confine himself strictly to his duties at Massowah. Could a man like Theodore fail to see in these facts, and in the language and demeanour of the new Consul conformable to these instructions, a change in the feeling of England towards himself, and an alliance with his enemies? Nevertheless, he applied one more test to our sincerity. He wrote a

* Lord Russell to Captain Cameron, No. 314, dated Feb. 2, 1861.—*Abyssinian Blue Book*, p. 199.

† Mr. Colquhoun to Lord Russell, No. 315, dated Feb. 28, 1861, with enclosures.—*Ibid.* p. 200.

‡ Mr. Murray to Captain Cameron, No. 325, dated Nov. 16, 1861.—*Ibid.* p. 205.

§ Earl Russell to Captain Cameron, No. 329, dated Feb. 22, 1862, and enclosure.—*Ibid.* pp. 207, 208.

letter to Her Britannic Majesty, which was forwarded by Captain Cameron in his despatch of October 31, 1862.* No notice whatever was taken of this letter by Earl Russell, and when nearly two years elapsed, and no answer was returned, nor any satisfactory explanation furnished by Captain Cameron, is it to be wondered at that the wrath of the King overflowed, and that, believing himself to have been insulted and deceived, he should, in his imperfect civilisation, have had recourse to the extreme measure of imprisoning the Consul? Such, in my opinion, was the cause of this disaster—an abrupt change of policy, and studied discourtesy, culminating in the contemptuous neglect to reply to the King's letter.

Nor did his Lordship improve matters by his subsequent proceedings, if he did not aggravate them. In fact, he appears never to have realised the situation, or the character of the King. Thus, on Captain Cameron's imprisonment, he directed the Consul-General of Egypt to demand his release, but accompanied this demand with a menace.† This failing, he at last determined to reply to the King's letter; but the good effect of this resolution was marred by the appointment as envoy of a gentleman who was a Turkish subject, and who seems to have had no other recommendation than that he had been the confidential servant of Mr. Layard, and in reward for his services then held the post of Assistant Resident at Aden. Without the slightest wish to disparage Mr. Rassam, or to depreciate his merits, I believe there is, as there can be, only one opinion—that he was not fitted, either by birth or his antecedents, to represent Her Britannic Majesty on such a delicate matter with such a proud and sensitive monarch as Theodore. The letter itself was little calculated to give satisfaction. It is true that the King, for

* *Vide* Abyssinian Blue Book, p. 224. † *Ibid.* p. 257.

the first time, got his proper title in it, but no explanation was offered of the delay in sending it, and its tone was that of cold politeness.* It is curious, as indicating Lord Russell's indifference, and his desire to have nothing to do with Abyssinia or its King, that in the original letter † (for there were two), the King's Embassy was declined, this being a matter on which Theodore had set his heart, and which had been formerly agreed to by the British Government.

The result of all this mismanagement, and of Mr. Rassam's imprudence in sending away the prisoners, as it were, surreptitiously, was that he shared the fate of Captain Cameron, and thus a resort to coercive measures, involving an enormous expenditure, was forced upon the country.

I do not enter into these details from any feeling of hostility towards the late Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and his deputy. I lament indeed their ignorance (for such I believe it to have been), which led them to undervalue this King, and to look upon him as a savage—a misconception which was the cause of these blunders—but I do not pretend to judge them. My object is the truth, and by its means to obtain an impartial judgment on the acts of the King of Abyssinia, who appears to me to have been more sinned against than sinning.

With the above facts before us, it is worth considering whether we should rely solely on force to obtain the release of the captives, or accompany this with conciliatory offers. It is useless to conjecture what King Theodore may do, but one thing is certain—that he knows he has a valuable prize in the captives, and will not easily give them up without an equivalent. If he stands a siege at Magdala, and he is brave enough to do so, that would be our best chance of success; but if he retreats into the

* *Vide* Abyssinian Blue Book, p. 309. † *Ibid.* p. 270.

mountains, it will be impossible to follow him with any hope of success, at least before the rainy season begins.

For this reason I think it very desirable that the door of reconciliation should be left open—that while Sir Robert Napier carries the sword in one hand, he should hold the olive-branch in the other; and that means should be found of letting the King understand that the English people are not ill-disposed towards him, and wish well to him and his dynasty—that they regret the misunderstanding which has brought matters to this pass, and that the restoration of the captives would bring back the former state of friendship. I regret, for this reason, that Colonel Merewether did not forward the letter I wrote to the King. It did not compromise the Government, and could have done no harm, and in all probability might have done much good, at least in opening a friendly channel of communication which the King could trust.

It is not to be expected that, failing force, the captives should be recovered without ransom. But a supply of arms and ammunition, and permission to a certain number of artisans and engineers to volunteer into the King's service, would suffice, and need not be grudged.

In fact, it is our interest to support King Theodore in consolidating his power, and nothing could be so injurious to us as his death at this moment. Anarchy would immediately ensue, and if we did not ourselves occupy the country, Abyssinia would fall an easy prey to the first invader, whether Turk, Egyptian, or French. On the other hand, by assisting him in the above way, and with our advice and good offices when required, especially in a rectification of his frontier, and by obtaining the restitution of Massowah, and recognising his authority on the seacoast, we should be the means of restoring to the civilised world a Christian country, which has been for centuries shut out from it; and while this would redound

to the honour and credit of England, she would be compensated also for her present heavy expenditure, by the trade and commerce which would certainly spring up. Whatever be the policy adopted—whether this, or to leave Abyssinia to its fate—events will always be too strong for man, and these, I believe, are all tending to the speedy emancipation of Abyssinia. When that happy consummation arrives, it will be a consolation to think that the life of the humble pioneer to this result was not spent in vain, and that his death was an honourable sacrifice in the service of his country and of mankind!

GLOSSARY.

Abasa, female *tejj*-maker
Abissho, syn. with *Astenaggaree*
Aboona, Coptic high priest
Adewairi, a cleared space, hall of audience
Adirash, a banquet
Afellaiga, horseman of rank
Affa Negoose, mouth of the king
Ajizzo, wild rice
Agafarea, doorkeeper
Agamen, a prickly thorn
Agazin, a large species of antelope
Ajaz, a commissary or steward of a household
Akto, medicinal plant, a remedy for worms
Alga, a couch
Alika, a priest, head of a village, &c.
Ambo, salt springs
Ambuza, small black river-fish, like a shark
Andood, a medicinal plant, used as soap
Ankasai, bamboo
Armawee, Gentiles
Armena, barbarians, foreigners
Asalafic, a serving-man
Asmaree, male minstrel
Astenaggaree, or *Abissho*, medicinal plant, the berries intoxicating

Balegger, a countryman
Baldarabba, speaker
Bal kamees, officers of rank vested with the silken shirt
Bal negarete, officers of rank entitled to beat kettledrums
Basha, chief of the gunners
Beggara, a ten-stringed harp
Bellata gaëta, kind of prime minister
Benaick, or *Bennaicha*, head ornament of the war-horse
Berakut, gifts
Berbeesa, a species of large tree
Betoa, silver-gilt cuff or armlet
Bidf, a disease among horses
Boorkoota, bread
Boorree, sea-salt
Boosa, beer
Boto, medicinal plant
Bouddha, hyæna sorcerer
Burburruk, species of fruit tree

Canta-tuffa, long curved thorn
Cerrus beyt, household of a chief
Chad, straw
Chaign, the Ras's treasure-guard
Chalika zuffan-bet, chief of the night guards
Chelada, a species of monkey
Concho, a disease resembling quinsy
Coso, species of tree, or shrub
Coway, gun
Cullub, food, provisions

Dagoosa, linseed
Dampto, leveller
Deftara, scribe
Dejajmatch, great chief, a duke
Dejin, rearguard
Dekama, feeble; a race of beggars
Demgel, a very large species of reed
Dennich, a species of potato
Derr (chess), rook
Desta, happiness, or joy
Devra (*Geez* language), mountain
Devro, church
Dona, maize
Dookoola, a species of antelope
Doomfata, boastful recital of warlike deeds
Doorgo, allowance
Dowel (verb), tolling the church bell, in token of taking sanctuary
Dufarsa, a large species of antelope
Duhoole, a small species of antelope
Durra, millet

Elfun, women's apartment
Ensett, banana, or fig-tree
Esgibo, cry of hunger

Faico, a small species of deer
Faro, a species of hyæna
Fellasha, a Jew
Fetfet, a kind of pudding
Fettah, prayers for the dead
Finnaysa, mane of the wild ass, worn as an ornament of the war-horse
Fit-aurari, a chief, the head of the advance-guard
Fitha, or *Fitta Negust*, written laws
Fokera, Mussulman *dervish*, or priest
Furz (chess), knight

Gambo, carrier
Gamee, land midshipman
Ganeem, demon, sprite
Gau, a water spirit
Gayt, show, display
Geddai, killing
Geddam, city of refuge
Gerowah, bitter plant, used in fevers
Gibaroa, a species of large tree, resembling a candelabra
Giraffe, whip made of ox-hide
Gittee, a game
Gojo, hut
Gooddo, a curved double-edged knife, eighteen inches long (Galla)
Goof, sudden flood (metaphorically, abundance)
Gooks, a national game on horseback
Goordah, a string worn round the loins (Galla)
Goraysa, a monkey, with long white silky hair
Gourbaiqua alika, head of the *tejj* carriers
Guvoota, a game
Gwassa, grass that grows in large tufts

Hamina, a class of beggars
Hooree, canoe

Ikka bayt, property house, or store
Insoosilla, a root, rose-coloured dye

Jereed, syn. with *Gooks*
Joveer, a species of eagle (Galla)

Kalicha, coronet
Kanar, six-stringed guitar
Kibella, a great feast, on the Saturday before Lent
Kibra Negust, register of kings
Kit, adhesive plant, used in flesh-wounds
Kohb, hook
Korbutta, inflated bag, used in crossing rivers
Koso, fresh butter
Kullubaigin, outdoor servants
Kurkala, very large species of bamboo
Kurrutt, a plant

Layra, public assembly (Galla)
Lick, a judge
Limoot, ornament of the war-horse

Madaga, bushel measure
Malakut, a kind of trombone
Malkoko, a small quadruped
Matcha-mitcha, a medicinal plant
Medâk (chess), pawn
Medhansaltûn, one day in each month, kept sacred
Metâll, a sudden stroke of illness
Miseraj, good news
Missanna, a root, powerfully purgative
Moosinna, a species of tree, bark medicinal
Mora, the membrane of the stomach of oxen (Galla)
Mugozo, petty landholder, yeoman
Mungerash, female minstrel

Negadeh Ras, chief of the merchants
Negarete, drum
Negarete-match, head drummer
Neyoose (chess), king
Nephsee, life (Galla)
Nook, plant from which oil is extracted

Onaki, medicine-man

Pheel (chess), bishop

Quod, coil of cotton which supplies the place of a match

Ras, head of the realm

Samagata, sky-viewer
Sassa, a small species of antelope
Schifta, rebel
Seff Zagry, spearmen, or sword-bearers
Selpha, wooden lance (metaphorically, order of battle)
Shamagella, old men; sages
Shirro, porridge
Shoom, governor

Shotel, Abyssinian sabre
Sunteridge, the game of chess

Tabot, the host (ecclesiastical)
Tamaree, clerical students
Tasma, a species of wild honey
Tchegee, priest appointed by the Ras
Tejj, mead
Tejj-asalafic, cupbearer
Tejj-milkanea, maker and purveyor of mead
Teph, a species of corn, of which bread is made
Tokola, a species of wolf
Tonkwa, a reed canoe used on Lake Tsana

Umbilta, musical instrument, a pipe

Wabbo, a species of panther
Waffo waggea, a game
Wagenose, a medicinal plant
Waggayra, surgeon
Wombar, throne
Wombbo, a large species of deer
Woncha, horn
Wosfatt, worms (the disease)
Wusk-be-maida, 'gold on the plain' (a plant)

Zar, a demon
Zayt, olives
Zenar, pouch-belt
Zeng, a blunt lance
Zibbad, civet cat
Ziganyas, chosen troop of horsemen
Zillau, a race of nomads
Zubaiqua alika, chief of the day guards
Zurruf, acts of valour

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